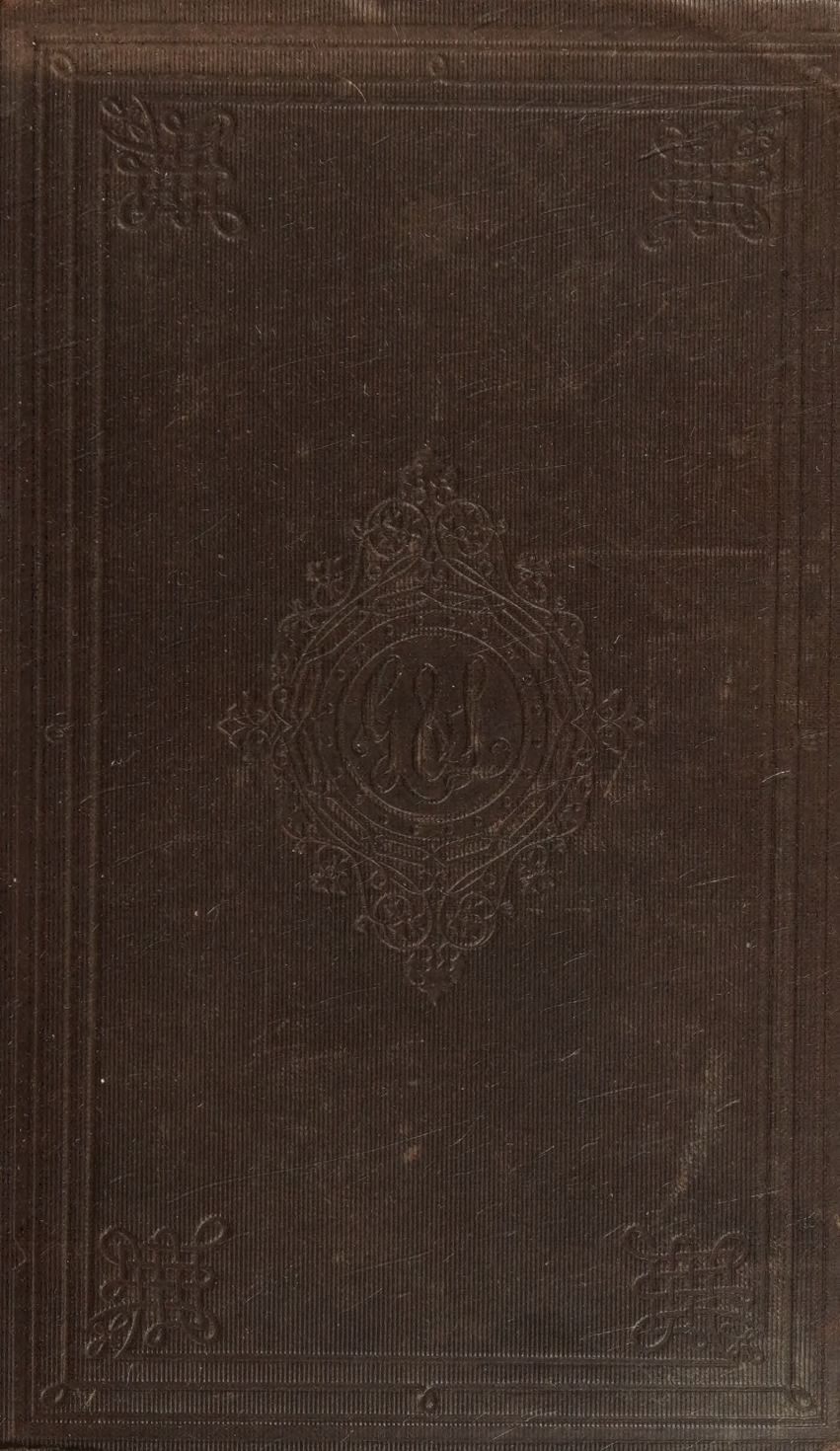

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XXIII.

NOBLE CAREER OF ANTOINE COURT.

Let us accompany Bridaine in his visit to him who was mentioned by the Cevenol as the friend of Rabaut.

Being ignorant of his address, he thought he might procure it from the door-keeper of the Academy of Inscriptions. He did so. Gebelin lived in the Rue des Menestriers.

Court de Gebelin had been for some time the central agent of the French Protestants. A singular toleration had allowed him to take this title almost officially. The Protestants, according to the last edicts of Louis XIV., were no longer even rebels for whom pardon might be demanded; *they no longer existed;* their name was banished from the official decrees;*—and yet at Paris, at Versailles, in the ministerial offices, in the saloons, everywhere, a man was allowed to go about unceasingly, with their grievances in his mouth, and their petitions in his hand.

This single fact is enough to show how undecided and desultory was the despotism of this epoch. At the very time when the most atrocious severities in the provinces sullied those who instigated them, the man who passed his life in

* They were called *new converts.* We shall see further on what this signified, and what an infernal meaning had been given to the word.

branding them was allowed to have his liberty in the midst of the capital. The very name *Gebelin*, a protest against the barbarous laws which oppressed his brethren in the faith, was only one of the surnames which had aided his father, Antoine Court, to elude the blood-hounds of the great king.

Antoine Court! Another of those men who need only have been placed in another sphere, in order to be universally counted among the illustrious of their day, and the regenerators of their country.

It was in 1713. Languedoc, after all the ravages of the Camisard war, had borne its share of the general calamities. To the rigors of oppression were added those of the disastrous winter of 1709. Levies of troops and enormous contributions had been exacted from this unhappy country. It might have drawn tears of blood from those who had seen it before the revocation of the edict of Nantes.

That which distressed them more than anything else, was the internal state of the few remains of their churches. No longer was there any organization, nor were there consistories, nor pastors. War and persecution had broken, annihilated all. Among the unfortunates who vegetated upon this soil crimsoned with the blood of their brethren, were some who resigned all hope, and waited for rest in death alone; while others gave themselves up to all the aberrations of a fanaticism more fatal than persecution itself. Prophets and prophetesses, poor creatures crazed by the magnitude of their perils, seriously compromised the solemn heritage of Saurin, Jurieu and Claude. Disorder and ridicule threatened to finish what the fire and sword had spared.

Such was the chaos in the midst of which we perceive the appearance of Antoine Court. He is not eighteen years of age, and his plan is already formed. He will gather together these

scattered remains. He will appoint himself aids. He will excite some, and calm others. He will go to the desert and set up that pulpit which has been torn from the churches; he will ascend it, calm and discreet, and religion shall no longer speak any but a language worthy of her. He will have consistories with their elders, their deacons, their pastors regularly installed; there shall again be seen conferences and synods; in short, all the former Church, in form and principles, zeal and order, discipline and faith, shall reappear. And that which others would not venture to attempt in times of peace, with the aid and approbation of the powerful of this world, he will undertake, he, hunted, outlawed, without other support than his faith, without other aid than that of God.

Thus planned and thus performed Antoine Court. We shall not follow him through the details of his long and laborious career. Of the five pastors who had in 1717 signed with him the report of the first synod held under his direction, *four*,* within a few years, had perished on the scaffold; but on the other hand, towards 1744, in the same places where he had at first had so much trouble to assemble fifteen, thirty, an hundred persons,—there were now held meetings of five thousand, of eight thousand, to whom he had the joy of preaching, or of hearing Rabaut preach. He had been at first the only pastor; he left sixty.

Enthusiasm has more than once, in a shorter period, produced more striking results; but the carrying on during thirty years, step by step, in the midst of unceasing perils, without appealing to enthusiasm in the beginning, but on the contrary repressing it,—of so great and so difficult a reorganization,—is a miracle of perseverance and courage such as history has seldom, perhaps never, been called upon to record.

* Hue, Vesson, Arnaud, and Durand.

XXIV.

LITERARY LABORS OF COURT DE GEBELIN.

Court died in 1760. Early worn out by the labors of this fearful mission, he had gone to Lausanne to place himself at the head of a seminary in that place, founded by him about 1725, with the aid of a few foreign sovereigns.

The archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Wake, and the celebrated Alphonse Turretin, professor at Geneva, had actively assisted in the founding of this establishment. There, went on in silence, the work which Louis XIV. believed buried beneath the ruins of the schools of Saumur and of Sedan; there were gathered together from all parts of the kingdom, those who were conscious, as Court said, of the vocation of martyrs. There his son had studied,—he whom we now perceive established at Paris; there, at this time, was the eldest son of Rabaut, afterwards known by the name of Saint-Etienne,—who was one day to perish on a different scaffold from that which his father had braved.

Heir to these glorious traditions, Court de Gebelin had, however, not taken an active share in the ministry. Not because he did not feel as much as any of the others, and even more, the vocation exacted by his father. Before quitting Lausanne, he had joyfully received his qualification for the gallows, as it was called. But from his youth he had been remarkable for talents so uncommon, that the most zealous hesitated to place such a stake on the fearful risks of the Protestant apostleship. It was perceived that his place was in the centre, that in that position he could be of great service, and there had been but one opinion in regard to his deciding upon it. A general tour

throughout the provinces had made him acquainted with their sufferings, their necessities, their wishes. Rabaut was to be the bishop, as he had already been for a long time, and Court the minister of the forms of worship.

Let us visit him in his house in the Rue des Menestriers, where we shall soon see Bridaine make his appearance.

We are in his study. At first view, we might suppose ourselves again in that of d'Alembert. But let us approach. Never has such a medley of work and business offered itself to our observation.

Court is seated before a large table, upon which are piled books of every shape, and letters in every imaginable hand; a vast chaos in which you will never see him lose himself or even hesitate for a moment. Two different sheets of paper are before him, upon both of which he has begun to write. One is a petition to the Count de Saint-Florentin,* the other a memorial to the president Des Brosses. "Yes, Monsieur," he writes in the latter, "I have found more than three hundred French words which are indisputably derived from the Arabic,—" "Yes, Monsieur," he writes in the former, "it is now two years since Fabre was sent to the galleys on account of an action for which in ancient times he would have been crowned." He adds a sentence to one, and a sentence to the other, which does not prevent him, as he goes on, from thinking of this and that other work, which he also has on hand, and which he suddenly goes to look for, in some drawer, in order to change a word, or add some note or detail. You fancy that these two closed books upon which he rests his elbow, are to aid him in the

* Minister of the king's household, and charged, from this title, with all that concerned the Protestants. The persecution was set down in the list of the king's private affairs, as if it were feared that the glory of it would otherwise not be sufficiently ascribed to him.

same researches? No, one is the polyglott of Alcala, quite surprised to see itself in heretic hands; the other is the *Martyrology* of Crespin, that sombre legend of French protestantism. There are scarcely a dozen copies of it left in the kingdom, it has been so hunted after, and so many have been burned! There, are the ancients, opened in many places; there, quite recent works, in which his searching pencil has already noted many a page. Here is the *Worship of Fetish Deities*, by president des Brosses; here the *History of Yemen*, and the *Table of Arabic Kings*, by the marquis de Bréquigny; here the *Explanation of the Mosaic of Palestrina*, by the abbé Arnaud; here a *Treatise on Mathematical Infinitude*, by the Genevese Achard, judge at Berlin; here a memorial on the Chinese, by Monsieur de Guignes, of the Academy of Inscriptions; here an answer to the memorial, *Doubts*, by Deshautesraies; here a *Theory of Taxes*, for which its author, the marquis de Mirabeau, is at this moment under lock and key; here the *History of Wigs*, by Thiers, a doctor of theology, with Greek and Hebrew quotations; here, in a word is all that the first six months of 1760 have produced of archæological labors, and learned novelties. But whilst the age has become learned in order to amuse itself, in order to fill by means of labors of the head, that vacuum which departed faith has left in the heart,—he, a man of faith above all, brings his tablet to the temple of science, because he wishes that it may be a temple to God.

XXV.

GEBELIN AND THE BOOKSELLER.—GREAT DIFFICULTY WITH WHICH THE HUGUENOTS WERE ABLE TO PRESERVE THEIR BIBLES AND RELIGIOUS BOOKS.

He has finished writing, and rises.

"Eleven o'clock, already, and I have not yet received my letters. And Rabaut does not return."

He walked up and down the room a moment, with his arms folded.

"Here he is, I believe—Ah! it is you, Dumont—"

"Ah! Monsieur—"

"Did you go to see the burning?"

"Ah! Monsieur, do not jest. Do you know who it was that betrayed us? My clerk—"

"The protegé of Monsieur Helvétius?"

"The same."

"How did you discover it?"

"It would be a long story; but the thing is certain, too certain. He confesses, for that matter.

"You have turned him off?"

"Certainly; but what is to be gained by it? I shall be watched now."

"They have other things to do, Dumont. I am going to see these gentlemen, besides; I wish to make them feel a little ashamed of their decree."

"Good. But the fine, in the meantime? I have advanced it, you know."

"The fine? I shall of course repay you—as soon as I can. Just at present I have not a crown. I have sent off within the last few day all the funds I had left. Two hundred livres to

the galleys at Toulon; two hundred to those at Marseilles, and one hundred to our prisoners of Aignes Mortes. All together just what this miserable clerk received! How bad laws instigate bad actions! If the privilege of remaining unknown had not been offered him, would he have dreamed of betraying us? And this fine, for his profit! The time will come when it will be asked how there ever could have existed such immoral laws, or judges who did not recoil before the immorality of executing them. But after all, thank God, they did not find a great deal—"

"Not one quarter of what I had in my back shop. Now everything is in the cellar. If they come back—"

"They will not come back. There remain—"

"One hundred Bibles, I believe, and eight hundred New Testaments. As for catechisms, there are perhaps three thousand, besides the psalm books and the collections of prayers."

"Nearly as many, in fact, as were seized two years ago, with Jean Carbière, at Bordeaux. That was a fire, Dumont!* Compared with that, what was the affair of this morning? We are rich."

"With a buried treasure."

"Buried, indeed, since it is in your cellar. It must be taken out of there, however. On all sides I am now asked for books. In Guyenne, since the great burning at Bordeaux, they do not know where to get any. In Bearn, in Poitou, in Dauphiny, the pastors lament that they receive so few. At Nîmes, the depôts will soon be exhausted. Happily it is the season for the fair of Beaucaire. All my measures are taken. In a month, Dumont, your cellar is empty."

"God grant it!"

* About sixteen thousand volumes were burned at Bordeaux, the 17th of April, 1758.

"He will grant it. Here are my letters, I believe. There ought to be replies upon this very subject."

The fair of Beaucaire had many a time come in season to aid the spiritual purveyors of the Protestants of the South. During this great transportation of people and goods, pastors and books could circulate with a little less danger. Rabaut had even adopted sometimes, upon these occasions, the character of a *merchant of fine pearls*, doubtless in innocent allusion to the *pearl of great price*, under which emblem, the Bible has designated itself. It was true, that even at Beaucaire, in 1735, there had been an auto-da-fé almost equal to that at Bordeaux; but these checks, very rare, moreover, only served to call forth the invention of new methods of transportation.

The books generally came from Holland through Paris, and from Geneva through Lyons or Grenoble. In all the cities there were merchants who could be depended upon, and who acted as intermediaries. Inside of bales of goods, and in cases and barrels of provisions, sometimes without any other precaution than a thick envelope and a false label, thousands of volumes went from North to South, from East to West, from the free to their oppressed brethren. But in the midst of these courageous frauds, Protestant authority was on the watch that nothing should be done save what necessity rendered legitimate. A decree of the synod of 1731, excommunicates whosoever should by fraud enter anything besides these religious books. Difficult as it was to procure a sufficient number of these, it was often still more so to preserve them. Various edicts, renewed in 1729, had commanded the seizure and destruction of all books employed by Protestants. In the first requisition it was enjoined upon them to bring these themselves; if not, an *arbitrary** fine, fixed upon them by the in-

* This word is in the edict of 1729, and in almost all those which

tendant of the province. In case of a second offence, another arbitrary fine, but which must not be less than a third of the culprit's possession; finally, three years of banishment. All information was received; any consul of a commune, or any priest, might enter the houses and make the necessary search. It is by millions, therefore, that we must compute the volumes destroyed in conformity to these edicts; for instruction, the companion of the Reformation, had multiplied books among all ranks, throughout Protestant France. It was a sad day when the old family Bible must be given up, the book doubly revered, sacred because it was the Bible, and sacred from the recollections connected with it! Children, parents, grandparents, all, from their earliest years, had daily seen and touched it. It had been present, like the household deities of the ancients, at all the joys and all the sorrows of the family. A touching custom had inscribed on its first or its last leaves, sometimes even on the margin of its pages, the principal events in all these humble lives. In such a year, on such a day, a child was born,—and this child was perhaps the grandfather, even the great-grandfather, of the father or grandfather now living, for these Bibles dated for the most part from the earliest times of the Reformation. Then there were marriages, and baptisms, and deaths, and other births. And now all these pious monuments must perish at once in the flames!

speak of pecuniary penalties to be inflicted upon the Protestants. The right of confiscation, so odious even in the hands of princes or tribunals, existed, in fact, in those of the lowest intendants.

XXVI.

GEBELIN'S CORRESPONDENCE.

Court had just received his letters, through the hands of a confidential bearer. Two or three bore his address; the others had been received by different persons in Paris, for although the police appeared to close their eyes, it had been judged more prudent not to draw attention to his immense correspondence. There were also two for Rabaut,—for Monsieur Tuabar, for that it will be remembered, was his name when in Paris.

"Well, Dumont, what did I tell you?" cried Court, after having opened one by hazard. "See,—read. This, however, does not come very far. It is from my friend Delabroue, chaplain to the embassy from Holland. It is true that I wrote him yesterday."

Dumont took the letter and read:

"'I had not waited until I received your note, my dear friend and brother, in order to busy myself about the matter of which you speak. I wrote without delay to our friends in Holland, and I hope that they will soon collect the sum. But as the reply cannot be received for several days, I have contrived to procure the fifteen hundred livres, and you will receive them in the course of the day. May God send you no worse trial, and all will be well. Your friend and brother.

"'P. S.—I have just put the finishing stroke to my work. The title embarrasses me a little. It will be, I think, *The Spirit of Jesus Christ in regard to Toleration.* What do you think of it?'"

"I shall reflect upon it," said Court. "In the meantime,

your fine is ready. Ah! some more money! But I expected this. The quarter day is here, and this is the addition to the salaries of the pastors which is sent by the committee at Geneva."*

"That is to be sent to Nîmes?" said the bookseller.

"To Nîmes, Alais and Toulouse. By the way, I have some one who takes the charge of sending it. It is a Genevese, named Necker, employed in the house of Thelusson, brothers."

"The Necker who is said to be so intelligent?"

"Yes; a young man who will make his way. Ah! here is what I was looking for,—an excellent letter from Beaucaire. Take it. Everything is marked, I see; the addresses, the statements to be made. Good. Your cellar will be empty in a week, instead of a month, Master Dumont,—at least unless something arrives with which we must fill it again."

He went away, half contented, half uneasy. He was one of those Protestants of which many were to be found in the large cities, Protestant enough at heart, but little desirous of compromising themselves. Shall we cast the first stone at them? Let us remember the difficulties of their position. The least infringement of an edict might be followed by terrible punishments. It was an indulgence that the parliament had not condemned Dumont to close his shop; and if they had had the slightest desire to send him to the galleys, they might easily have found more than one clause in these same edicts to which he could have found nothing to reply. Guillaume Issoire had been sent thither for having received barrels marked *Black and white peas*, which had been found full of Ostervald's catechisms. Besides, Dumont passed for a Catholic. The forced

* The salaries of the pastors were at this time from seven to eight hundred francs. The addition sent from Geneva was three hundred and fifty.

abjuration of his father had transmitted him this title, which he retained, like so many others, because he had need of it in order to live. If this was hypocrisy, whose fault was it? That of the unhappy creatures who submitted to it as to a disgrace, or of those who made it necessary for them to do so?

XXVII.

RABAUT.—DISHONESTY OF THE ROMISH CHURCH.

Left alone, Court again went to his letters. He had before him a kind of registry, in which, as he went along, he wrote what he did not wish to forget.

"To write to Monsieur de Voltaire, in order that he shall interest himself for the galley slave, Chaumont of Geneva, condemned for life, in '51, by Monsieur de Saint-Priest, intendant of Languedoc, for having attended two meetings."*

"To see what has become of the petition of Jean Besson, of Alais, that he may be allowed to sell his house for 4,500 livres to Mark Ducros, of the same place."†

"To reply to the abbé Barthelemy that I shall go and see him some of these days; that if I can aid him in decyphering the inscription, I shall do it with pleasure; that the word in question is not in the Polyglott, etc."

"To write to Lausanne that pastor Campredon cannot remain alone in Normandy; that one or two colleagues must absolutely be found for him."‡

* Chaumont, for whom Voltaire wrote to the duke de Choiseul, was only liberated in 1764.

† Protestants were not allowed to sell houses and lands of more than three thousand francs value. Emigration was thus impossible for landholders, unless they abandoned everything.

‡ The churches in Normandy had only been reorganized towards 1744, by the pastor Viala.

"To send to Monsieur Quesnay,* the commencement of my calculations in regard to the price of grain at Rome, at the end of the reign of Augustus."

"Ah ha!" he murmured, opening the last letter, "here is the abbé de Caveirac, who is going to return to the charge!† He repents of having been too kind."

"Come in, come in," he continued, addressing himself to Rabaut, whose step he heard in an adjoining apartment,—"come and see how far the *fides romana* can carry a man."

Rabaut entered. "What is it?" he asked.

"I am informed that there is a publication of the abbé de Caveirac, in which he pretends to prove that there were scarcely a thousand persons killed in Paris on Saint Bartholomew's day."

"A thousand? Oh, my dear friend, that is still quite reasonable. People have asserted to me that there were not five hundred killed, and two or three thousand, at the furthest, in the whole kingdom."

"Why, they are crazy, these people! Who do they think will believe them?"

"Who? Ah, my poor friend, it is easy to see that you only live among the savants! They will be believed—by all whose interest it is to believe them; and the savants will at length believe it also. Has it not already been attempted to prove, in some histories, that the massacre of Saint Bartholomew was a purely political affair, merely a game, in which the Protestants had the ill luck to be neither the slyest nor the strongest? This excuse comes rather late. It would be curi-

* The economist.

† He had published, in 1755, in answer to the memorial of Rippert de Monclar, a *Dissertation upon the Toleration of Protestants in France.* Two years afterwards, he had added to it a *Defence of Louis XIV.* and his council.

ous enough for the Roman Church to have bowed its head for nearly two hundred years beneath the infamy of such a recollection, if it had had any means of throwing it off. But now the career is open. The Saint Bartholomew massacre will, in fifty years, be nothing more than a mere riot, maliciously exaggerated by us; in an hundred years, it will be pure calumny against the good mother church."*

"Probably; and doubtless calumny also, all that our descendants may say of our sufferings at the present day."

"Yes," resumed Rabaut; "if I had not a thousand other reasons for being persuaded that the Roman Church teaches error, its condemnation might be taken, in my opinion, from this frightful facility in lying. Not a month passes, not a week, that I am not obliged to take up my pen to combat the most absurd falsities. And it is not by the curés and monks only that these are circulated. The bishops, whom their position itself, in default of conscience, ought to render more careful, are only the bolder, as if they felt themselves placed too high for our denials ever to reach them. After your father had replied so well, in '52, to that famous letter† in which the

* Bossuet has computed at six thousand, (of which at least five hundred were noblemen,) the number of deaths in Paris; and at twenty-five or thirty thousand those in the provinces. "The news of the massacre spread horror everywhere," he adds. "The hatred of heresy made them receive it with pleasure at Rome." He denied that there was any plot whatever on the part of the Protestants. "In order to impress the idea of a plot on all minds," he says, "public thanks were given to God, upon the pretended discovery. These shams imposed upon no one, and the action just committed was considered so much the more detestable by good people, because there had been no pretext found which had the least plausibility."

Bossuet, it may be seen, is much less anti-Protestant than certain writers and preachers of the present day.

† Letter to the comptroller-general, Monsieur de Machault, "*Against*

bishop of Agen, Monsieur de Chabannes, accuses us of rejoicing at the misfortunes of France, it seemed as if this accusation could never again be renewed. Well, in our provinces there is never a single mandate published against us in which it is not re-produced or insinuated. And this assertion, though it be false, does not rest, after all, on an absurd foundation; for it would not be strange if we had but little love for a country where we have suffered so much. But how many other accusations are there, entirely, impudently false, and invariably repeated in all the writings of these gentlemen! One only, the bishop of Nîmes,* is an exception; and even he signalized himself sadly, at the time of the numerous re-baptizals in '52. As for the others, they put no restraint upon themselves; everything appears allowable. There is Monsieur de Montclus, bishop of Alais, who collects all that is related most disgraceful of Luther, Calvin, and all our reformers; or Monsieur de Saint-Jal, bishop of Castres, who accuses us of undermining the principles of morality, and authorizing debauchery and adultery; or Monsieur de Fontanges, bishop of Lavaur, who represents us as extending our hand to the infidels and the sacrilegious; or Monsieur de Crussol d'Uzés, bishop of La Rochelle, who thinks himself a great theologian, and who cannot write a sentence against our doctrines without seasoning it with a falsehood against ourselves. So much for written lies. Elsewhere it is still worse. In the pulpit, in the schools, in families, in the confessional, everywhere that we cannot follow our enemies step by step, they scatter and perpetuate the most absurd prejudices. It is not the fault of the priests, if the people among whom we live—who can see and speak with us

ne toleration of the Huguenots in the kingdom." It was upon this occasion that Antoine Court published his "*Impartial French Patriot.*"

* Monsieur de Becdelièvre.

every day—who have but to keep their eyes open, in short, to see what we are—do not look upon us as a kind of monster, scarcely belonging to the human race!"

XXVIII.

IS SHE ALTERED IN THIS RESPECT?

Did he exaggerate? Or was the picture correct in 1760, and would it be false at the present day?

It would be so undoubtedly in some points, in one especially.

If the Church were to be believed, it was for the interests of the throne that she exacted the destruction of the Protestants. There was not a mandate, not a memorial, in which their liberal ideas were not represented as deserving more than all else, to draw upon them the severities of royalty.

This is a source which is no longer at the present day open to their accusers. It would be re-opened without doubt, the day when we should again behold a Louis XIV. or a Louis XV. upon the throne; in the meantime, they profess democracy as loudly as possible. Protestants, accordingly, receive from their former oppressors, the permission to love liberty.

With this exception the old accusations go on their way; some just as they were formerly, others a little rejuvenated but all, or almost all, more audacious than ever.

XXIX.

GEBELIN'S GIGANTIC PLANS OF LITERARY LABOR.—THE PRISONERS OF AIGUES-MORTES.

"But enough of this," resumed the minister. "I have just come from the Palace of Justice. I saw burned—you know what. I feel a longing to be with some one who can understand what I felt at such a sight."

"Stay," said Court, "while the fire was burning, I received another book which will perhaps also be burned by them, but which will be nevertheless an eternal witness against their Church and themselves. This is the first copy of the history so long promised us by my father,* and the last pages of which he wrote only a few days before his death. I have still a precious manuscript, that of the *General History of the Protestants of France in their different places of refuge, since the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.* It contains a vast number of details which he alone could know, and which would be of the deepest interest to those families who have been broken up and scattered into exile. Unhappily these are merely notes, and they are still far from forming a book. I will finish it, if God spares my life.† It shall be the work of my old age."

"Another!—You frighten me, Gebelin, with your plans. Man proposes—"

"And God disposes, I know. But God does not forbid us to *propose*, particularly when it is for his glory."

"And who can tell us when it is really for his glory? Can

* *History of the Disturbances in the Cevennes*, by Antoine Court.

† The work was never carried out, and the manuscript was lost at the death of Court.

we ever know whether we actually think of him at such times? I have trembled for you, I confess, when I saw you in such a whirl. Reputation and fortune are there at your door."

"Let them enter, Rabaut, and we shall see. I too, sometimes tremble. I also fear that I may forget God for myself."

"Courage, then! It is a proof that you do not forget him."

"God grant it! But before trembling for the consequences, I must tremble at the work itself. I have at length sketched the plan of the enormous work, about which I have sometimes spoken to you in my letters. There will be twenty volumes,—thirty, perhaps—"

"And you will call it?—"

"*The Primitive World analyzed and compared with the Modern.*"

"Let us hear the plan."

"In the first volume, I follow throughout the Greek and Eastern allegories, the generating principles of the ancient religions.

"The second is an Universal Grammar, followed by a theoretical explanation of the process which has aided me in the study of languages.

"In the third, which I think I shall call the *Natural History of Speech*, I treat the great subject of the origin of language.

"The fourth, the *History of the Calendar*, will comprehend everything connected with the division of time, with astronomical observations, with chronology, etc.

"The fifth, is an Etymological Dictionary of our language.

"The sixth and seventh, an Etymological Dictionary of the Latin language.

"The eighth, a collection of general observations upon those which have preceded it.

"The ninth, an Etymological Dictionary of the Greek language.

"The tenth—"

"Enough! enough!" interrupted Rabaut. "You no longer frighten, but you overwhelm me. Why it would take twenty men to do all that!"

Gebelin laughed. "Twenty men, you say? I begin to be re-assured. Monsieur d'Alembert asserted that it would require forty.* Let us go on, and we shall see that one will do enough. You see this schedule? It is a dissertation in which I demonstrate that the language of Languedoc is anterior to the invasion of the Visigoths. I give the etymology of more than twelve hundred words of the language, of which about two hundred are Greek, six hundred Celtic, and the remainder Latin or Oriental. There are nearly an hundred pages, large ones as you see. Now, how long do you think I was at this?"

"A month?"

"Six days—and I was very far from having nothing else to do."

"Your materials were ready. You had only to arrange and write down—"

"Not at all. When I began, I did not know the tenth part of what I discovered or guessed as I went on. Lately, at the house of the marquis d'Aubais, they brought me an old Bible in the Grison language, which I had never studied in my life. Whereupon, I began on the spot to arrange I do not know how many observations on this idiom, its origin, its history, etc. When I took up the Anglo-Saxon books of the venerable Bede, I only had to apply my key, in order to understand them, and I could read them as easily as French."

"I know,—you do not study,—you devour. But—"

* Historical.

"But there is a great deal of pride in it, you were going to say. There is some pride. Yes—I feel it. But less than you appear to apprehend. Would I dream of giving all these details to another? I have talked to you, as to a second self. If I reach the end I propose, to God, to God alone the glory! But I shall die on the road—or else I will reach this end."*

"Gebelin, you argue in vain. I do not like these gigantic plans; I cannot help looking upon them as a sort of defiance of Providence. Take care. God forbids avarice,—and science is wealth! All that weighs down the miser who amasses gold,—avidity, pride, attachment to the things of this world,—are you not sensible that these may be felt in amassing knowledge? But pardon, dear brother, pardon! you have no need of my counsels."

"No need! Ah why are you not always at my side! You would force me to be wiser; and besides, you would give a more practical direction to my labors. You would teach me to do a little less for the learned, and much more for the world in general. We would take up our plan of translating the Bible."

"Have you altogether abandoned it?"

"I translated several psalms quite recently."

"God be praised! But shall you go on?"

"I am alarmed, I who am not often alarmed,—not at the labor, but at the responsibility. I have done enough, however, to be convinced how very far we still are from being able to say that the Old Testament has been translated. But of all the versions which have ever been brought to my notice, the

* Only the first nine volumes appeared; but at the death of the author, (1784,) his manuscripts filled upwards of fifty large portfolios. The letters and papers relative to the affairs of the Protestants, according to Rabaut, formed a still larger mass. All were lost.

Vulgate is certainly the worst. And to think that in their council of Trent, they dared to declare it authentic and inexpugnable! I have made the brave abbé Arnaud pass many a wretched hour on account of this unlucky decree. I showed him in the 22d Psalm alone, just as it is chanted by his Church, two or three contradictions which he was forced to admit. He asked me, if *our* translators had made none. I replied that our translators were only men, and that we had never declared them infallible. You should have seen him then,—struggling to prove that in declaring the Vulgate to be authentic, and in forbidding its alteration, the Church had not intended to proclaim its infallibility. 'But,' I said, 'suppose that this is the case, the decree of the council would only be the stranger. What! be aware that the Vulgate has faults, and yet declare that it must be used as it is, forever, just as if it had none! He was in agonies. I made up my mind to laugh. 'Confess,' I said, 'that it is a hard task to be at the same time a Catholic and a savant!' Another subject in regard to which I almost brought him to confess himself in rebellion against the council of Trent, was that of the apocryphal books. He confessed,—and how could he deny it?—that neither the Jews, nor the early Christians, nor the Fathers, nor the doctors, nor the Church herself, before this council, ever placed these books in the same rank with the others. The whole question, accordingly, is, whether the Church, with such precedents, had a right to place them there? He endeavored to prove it. I then asked him if in his heart and conscience he believed the decree exact and good; and as he dared not assert this, after what he had confessed, I said 'you see to what you are reduced! This decree, in which the Church gives you as authentic and sacred, writings formerly looked upon as not authentic, you do not believe any more than I do; you limit yourself to

maintaining that the Church had the right to make it, the right, in other words, to decree error. Is that being submissive? Is that being a Catholic?'"

"I have not met many persons," said Rabaut, "who were Catholics in any other way. As many rights as she may claim, are granted the Church in theory; but it is another thing to believe all she teaches. I also have often amused myself by condemning in the name of the council of Trent, many persons who called and believed themselves Catholics, thanks to the care which has been taken to conceal from them many an article which would have made them reject all the rest. This would all be diverting enough if the champions of the Roman Church were reduced to take to their petty loopholes as their only defence, but the nearer you have been to proving to them that they are not Catholics, the more they will show you by their hatred and violence, that they are still too much so. They persecute us, in fact, far less because they are Catholics, than because they fear to be thought not so; we have no greater enemies than those who are obliged to *stiffen* themselves the most, in order not to surrender before our reasonings, and it seems as if every one chooses to impute to us as crimes, precisely those points upon which we embarrass them the most. The priests, for example, without equalling Arnaud by a great deal, still doubtless know more or less what you were remarking just now, on the subject of the apocryphal books. Well, to hear them talk, one of their chief complaints against us, one of the principal sources of their indignation, is that we,—they say—mutilate the Bible by rejecting these books."

"It is an indulgence, moreover," added Gebelin, "if they do not set to work and jest on the somewhat ancient language of our old versions and our psalms, as if we were further from

the French of Pascal and Racine, than they from the Latin of Virgil and Cicero! Moreover, we *preceded* these great models, while they wrote their abominable Latin *after* Virgil and Cicero. It would appear that the abbé de Caveirac, in the midst of his atrocious calculations in regard to the Saint-Bartholomew massacre, still finds time to let fly a few bolts at us, upon this subject. I am going to send this letter to Delabroue. He will procure the work, and as he has already broken more than one lance with the author— But I had forgotten. There are two letters for you also. Here they are."

"This one—what a seal!"

"Let me see. The arms of Richelieu!"

Rabaut opened it, not without a certain emotion.

He was requested to make his appearance, on the next day but one, at Versailles. The letter was signed by one of the secretaries of the marshal.

"God be praised!" he said. "The petition has been read."

"By the king?"

"The letter does not say; but—"

"If it does not say so, do not count upon it."

"If I can see the duke, it is something."

"It may be much,—and it may be nothing. It is enough to make one shudder, my poor friend, to reflect upon what the fate of a thousand, of a million of human beings may depend; for it is all the same, frequently, to those who have to rule them. A moment of good or ill humor, an accident, a nothing, a word which may please or displease in a petition of twenty pages—and behold some evil ceases,—or else continues for another century!"

"Here is something which I fear comes but in season to confirm what you say," said Rabaut, breaking the seal of the other letter. "Precisely. I recognized the hand. See—

Marie Durand, prisoner for the sake of Jesus Christ, at the tower of Constancy."*

"She knew that you were at Paris?"

"No; she writes to Nimes. The letter was sent me from there."

"She is the oldest, is she not, of our poor sisters at Aigues-Mortes?"

"Anne Gaussaint, of Sommières, has been there for thirty-seven years; five others have been there more than thirty. Marie Durand only went there in 1732, the year in which her brother, the minister, was executed at Montpellier."

"Twenty-eight, thirty, thirty-seven years of prison for poor women, because they were convicted of praying to God otherwise than as the king, or the king's confessor, dictated! The pagans were far less cruel. They adjudged death without delay."

"More humane, indeed,—and, above all, more excusable, since there was war to the death between their deities and the God of the Christians."

"Is it possible to know pretty accurately the number of our female prisoners?"

"At Aigues-Mortes, nineteen."

"I know it; but elsewhere?"

"Elsewhere, it is impossible to fix any number. All the convents in the South contain some. Many may have died, without our knowing anything of it; many, of whom we cannot hear anything more, are undoubtedly still living. It is a terrible thing, Gebelin, even to pass by these dark buildings, silent as the grave, in which slowly linger on these women, torn from their husbands, their fathers, their children.† They

* At Aigues-Mortes.

† "It is just, Monsieur, that the patrol should be paid for the journeys

are not quite so frequently carried off now as formerly; but the edicts still exist, the threats continue, and the sword is none the less hanging over their heads. When a family is assembled together, it can never know whether it is not for the last time. Quite recently, after a truce, which it had been at last hoped might continue a long time, the tower of Constancy has received two new captives. One was the mother of Bruyn. She had been captured when returning from a meeting: her husband was sent to Toulon, she to Aigues-Mortes. The other was quite a young woman, Marguerite Robert, arrested by an order of Marshal de Thomond, governor of Guyenne. What had she done? Nothing more than thousands of others; she had refused to be married before a curé, and I had blessed her union. They wished to make an example for the others: they took the first comer, or rather they selected her, beautiful, young, interesting, in order that her misfortune should produce a more painful sensation. Her husband, Vincent, of Uzés, who has been left at liberty, is almost mad with grief."

"He wrote to me," said Gebelin, "to implore me to interest myself for her. I have moved heaven and earth, but in vain. It is easier here to obtain the pardon of a criminal condemned by justice, than that of a Protestant arraigned by one of those condemnations which fall upon us by accident, and without form of trial. Our tyrants fear, and not without reason, lest, by mitigating the sentence, they might seem to confess its injustice. They prefer to forget a man in the galleys, or a

they make in arresting and conducting the daughters of Protestants to the houses destined for their education. When the parents are really not able to pay these expenses, I shall take the necessary measures for defraying them."

Despatch of Monsieur de Saint-Florentin to the intendant at Rouen, July 18, 1751.

woman shut up in a tower, to confessing publicly why they have been sent, why they have been left there."*

"We had a sad proof of that," added Rabaut, "in regard to one of these poor women, Jeanne Guingues. She had a son in the army. This son was killed at Fontenoy in '45. In the midst of the transports of joy which the victory caused throughout the kingdom, we believed that the time was a favorable one to request the freedom of his mother. It was refused. Eight or ten years afterwards, the eldest of her grandsons was killed while fighting beneath the same banner. Another solicitation, another refusal. And she is still at Aigues-Mortes! Marie Durand, like the greater number of her companions, at last ceased to think of liberty. Her letters for a long time expressed unbounded resignation. Some friends, it appears, gave her hopes, and she became very unhappy. She wrote me constantly to implore me to act in her favor. In this letter again, see: 'For the sake of the bowels of Divine mercy, do everything you can to snatch us from this frightful sepulchre!' Poor women! What can I do? What can we do?"

"What indeed, when those even to whom we must send our petitions are not free to yield to our solicitations? During all

* "A long time since, Monsieur, you sent me a favorable notice of the Sieur Serres, imprisoned at the fort of Brescou for about twenty years, for having married the sister of a preacher. The king consents that he shall be liberated."

Despatch of Monsieur de Saint-Florentin to the intendant of Languedoc. (Lenain d'Asfeld.)

It is comprehensible that the government did not like to grant pardons which reminded them of such condemnations; accordingly, the decree of liberation always stated that the condemned had testified a sincere regret for his *crime*. Often, likewise, for fear that the pardon might seem to recognize his innocence, certain restrictions accompanied it. Thus this same Serres, upon his liberation from the fort of Brescou, was banished from Languedoc.

my efforts for our galley slaves, for our prisoners, I have not yet met any one, from the duke de Choiseul to the lowest clerk, who did not receive me kindly, and appear to be interested in their fate. At first I always went away full of hope; after each visit I was astonished to have succeeded so well, and so quickly. But days, months went by, and the pardon never came. The governor himself, the duke de Fitz-James, solicited the liberty of the prisoners at Aigues-Mortes, two years ago, but in vain. It is because each one, in these affairs, each intendant, governor, and minister,—even the king himself,—is only the jailor of the Church, and the Church is inexorable. The man who has been for forty years the instrument of all our sufferings, the count de Saint-Florentin, is, I am convinced, constantly at war with the bishops. It has been asserted to me, proofs in hand. There is no severity which the bishops have not requested to be increased, and made more complete; there is no relaxation in regard to which they do not show themselves irritated, as if it were a treason against their Church or against them. Monsieur de Saint-Florentin says to any who wish to know, that his archives would furnish a singular insight into this subject. Let these melancholy records be carefully preserved, for some day, when persecution has gone out of fashion, the French clergy will not fail to cast all the odium of it upon the government. Have not certain historians already begun to make of the Inquisition a purely secular tribunal, an entirely political institution, for whose enormities, consequently, the Church is not to be reproached?

XXX.

THE PRIEST AND THE HUGUENOT.—DISCUSSION ON THE UTILITY OF MONASTERIES IN A LITERARY POINT OF VIEW.—AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE AND OF THE CHURCH.

At this point of their conversation, Father Bridaine was announced. They looked at one another, amazed. Court could not understand so unexpected a visit from a man whom he only knew by reputation. Rabaut wished to retire, with the intention of making his appearance afterwards. On second thoughts he remained.

"I was not wrong, then," said the missionary, upon perceiving him. "It is you whom I sought, Monsieur; I only came to your friend in order to inquire your address. But you were talking, gentlemen,—I interrupt you—"

"A fortunate interruption," said Gebelin, "since it procures me the honor—"

Bridaine bowed. "We have not seen each other," he resumed, addressing himself to Rabaut, "since the day at Versailles."

"You think so?" said Rabaut. "Shall I tell you where you were an hour ago?"

"You have seen Bruyn?"

"Bruyn?—I do not know where he is. But I saw you, yourself, in the court of the Palace of Justice. You were present at what took place there. You picked up two half-burned leaves; you looked at them—in a manner—"

"Yes—" said Bridaine, with a little embarrassment. "But how did I happen to be there?"

"I saw you there. That is all I know about it."

"I had just seen, in his cell, him whom you saw in Meaux,

at the door of the church. He was recognized and arrested. He may at any time be executed. He wishes to see you."

"I will go. Shall I be able to enter?"

"I will procure you the necessary permission."

Rabaut believed the Cevenol guilty of the assassination of the colonel. Bridaine did not see fit to correct his error, or to speak to him of the measures he was going to take to endeavor to save Bruyn.

They took their seats. Bridaine would have preferred to be alone with Rabaut; Rabaut with Bridaine. An astonishing intimacy had sprung up between these two souls. They both felt themselves lofty enough to clasp each other's hands above the ramparts of the two Churches.

Accordingly, for want of any other subject, the conversation turned upon the labors of Gebelin. Bridaine had often heard them spoken of; Rabaut, first as a friend, then as a Protestant, was proud of them. He did not rest until the savant had laid before the missionary, as he had just done before him, the plan of his gigantic work. Bridaine was confounded by it. Men of action are more liable than any others, to be alarmed at extensive cabinet labors.

"Well," said the minister, "all Benedictines do not wear the habit of Saint Benedict, do they?"

"I did not believe that there existed in the midst of the distractions of the age, men so worthy to wear it."

"The distractions of the age," replied Rabaut, "injure those only who are absorbed by them. For a mind naturally active and strong, they form the materials of a struggle in which it can but gain in force, activity and resources. For such an one, the thought of time lost is but a stimulant to employ well what remains. He hastens to his labors as others hasten to their enjoyments. He does in a few hours more work, per-

haps, than a man who likes to work, but who has his whole time,—whom nothing hinders, nothing excites."

Bridaine smiled. "Is that an observation aimed at the convents."

"I did not think of them," replied the minister, "but if I had, would I have been wrong? Have we, without monasteries, had fewer learned men than you with them? And even without speaking of any Church beside your own, have you not had enough learned men who were not cloistered monks?"

"Monasteries were not instituted in order to make learned men."

"True; science was never less thought of than in those centuries when the greatest number were founded. But that does not prevent the service which has been done in this respect from being generally presented in our days as a powerful argument in their favor. My observation might serve as a reply to this argument."

"Were not all the master-pieces of antique literature preserved in the monasteries?"

"Yes," said Gebelin: "but how? I have made a number of researches on this subject, by whose results I have been struck, so little do they agree with what I have heard asserted by your Church. In the first place, in order that a benefit may deserve gratitude, it is necessary that the benefactor should have intended to do a service, or at least that he should not have rendered it without in the least suspecting it. And in this matter, did the monks imagine how much future ages were to owe to them? Can many of them be mentioned, who in preserving to us Virgil, Cicero, and Tacitus, appear to have been acquainted with what they preserved? The best proof that they were scarcely aware of it, is the state in which they have left the manuscripts to us; and above all, the immense

number which they defaced or allowed to be lost. Those which were delivered to us at the Renaissance, were not the thousandth part of the number which they could and ought to have preserved. And how many writings completely lost! How many authors of whom the names alone remain? How many works of the highest order, of which but three or four manuscripts have been found in all Europe? sometimes only one, as for instance the Phadrus, among others, discovered at Saint-Benedict, on the Loire; it would still lie buried there, for an indefinite length of time, if it had not been for the pillage of the abbey in 1562. Even Cicero, one of those least damaged during that thousand years of forgetfulness, we have not complete."

"I have already made the remark," said Bridaine, "that the convents were not established to serve as libraries. Perhaps, as you say, the argument to which your observations are a reply has been abused. Nevertheless, the fact is there; if the convents had not existed, where would you have gone to look for the ancients, you who love them so much?"

"Without the convents, that is to say, without the system of which the convents were a consequence, I think that we should have done very well without people to take care of the books, seeing that there would never have been any danger of their being lost. The history of the decline of letters may be divided, it seems to me, into three periods. During the first, the Church gradually seizes the monopoly of learning. During the second, having from day to day less to do in order to remain above the intellectual level of the people, she allows herself to decline into ignorance. In the third, she ends by finding herself if not below the people, at least below all those who have again begun to think and labor. It is from without, from her enemies, that she must recover her intellectual and

literary life. You speak of the Benedictines. They were the first, I know, to become an exception; but their finest works are posterior to the Reformation, and I could show you in every page traces of this great awakening. And what had the Reformation to do in order to give the signal for so much labor, to awaken in the opposite camp as well as in its own, all existing intelligence? Very little,—scarcely anything. An old book was taken up out of the dust. This dust was that which your Church had allowed to collect upon it,—ordering finally that it should eternally remain covered with it. Scarcely has it again seen the light, before everything in the world of ideas, seems to exist for and by it. Printing is proud to put itself at its service; all the sciences, all the arts come together and converge in it. Doctrines which you may hold to be false, but of which you cannot deny the immense renovating power, spring from these pages so long and so obstinately sealed. With this book alone in their hands, a few men find themselves strong against all the powers of Europe, learned in the presence of all its science, invincible to all the representatives of a past wounded to the death, from the pope to the emperor, from the magistrate to the hangman."

"Might I not retort all this?" said Bridaine. "It is not the first time, I might say, that God has allowed evil to gain the victory. Is all emancipation a benefit? Doubtless the fruit also, which the first man gathered in the terrestrial paradise, was savory. And yet, this fruit was—the forbidden fruit."

"Forbidden of God, and it is on that account, and that only, that his action was a crime."

"I understand. You would say that the study of the Bible has not been forbidden by God, but by the Church. But for us, the voice of the Church is the voice of God."

"Even when its commands are contrary to those of God?"

"It must be proved, in the first place, that this contradiction exists."

"Let us stop, Monsieur. I have not, in truth, the courage to commence the demonstration which you require. When a Catholic sincerely accepts the combat, on the ground of the Bible, *I* then feel tempted to refuse; my adversary appears to me, from this very fact, so little of a Catholic, that I should fear, by exciting him, to make him still less so. I prefer simply to send him to the inspired book which he consents to adopt as an arbitrator; at furthest, I venture to point out two or three questions which I should wish him to address to himself;—but solemnly, in the presence of this book, between his conscience and God."

"And these questions?"

"You wish to hear them? The first is this: 'among the teachings of the Church, are there none of which I never should have dreamed,—neither I, nor any other person, if we had had no other guide but the Scriptures? Should I have found, for instance, the mass, confession, purgatory, the worship of saints? Should I have seen in the Bible, in particular, either an interdiction to read it, or anything whatever, which could make me believe in the future possibility of such an interdiction?' This is the first question."

"And now my turn," said Bridaine.

"Allow me to continue. My three questions are so connected, that I must beg you to hear me to the end before replying."

"Let us hear."

"The second, then, is this: 'among these things which I should not have found in the Scriptures, how many are there which the Scriptures really appear to teach or authorize, and which I find it possible to prove from the Scriptures?' The

third and last is this; 'I may, it is true, draw from another source,—tradition. But can I seriously believe that doctrines so important in theory, so universally applicable in practice, would have been omitted, or so vaguely indicated in the Scriptures? Can I believe, for example,—that mass, confession, purgatory,—not to take up any other points,—these things which occupy so prominent a place in my life, in my worship, in the books which I read or write, in the sermons which I hear or preach,—can I believe, I say, that if God had wished to teach them, there would have been not one formal mention of them in the whole of the New Testament? The apostles, it is true, spoke more than they wrote; but can I imagine them writing two or three hundred pages,—nay,—twenty pages, ten pages, without clearly mentioning one of those grave points, which the Protestants deny? Is not the very fact that there may be a doubt upon the subject, a contest, in objects of such importance, a powerful opposing argument?' This is what I would have all the sincere, intelligent and pious men among you, ask themselves; this is the examination which I would have you one day make yourself."

"And how do you know that I have not made it?" interrupted the missionary.

"How? Because you are still a Catholic, still a priest. What! You have weighed, seriously weighed what Scripture says, or rather does not say, upon the subject of mass, confession, purgatory,—and yet have continued to perform the mass, hear confession, and speak of the souls in purgatory! You have seen that the Virgin is scarcely mentioned in the Gospels, totally forgotten in the Epistles, and you have persisted in recommending her worship as dating from the early days of the Church, as established at the direction of God and of the apostles! You have found in the Bible scores of invitations to read

it, scores of things which exclude the idea of any restriction whatever in these invitations; you have perceived that the Fathers advise, recommend, prescribe universally by the reading of it,—and you interdict it!"

"I?—never."

"Never? Then I have no more to say upon that subject. It is a matter between you and your Church. Its voice, you say, is the voice of God. If God commanded me to take the Bible away from my brethren, I should take great care not to allow them to have it."

"I also,—if the Church had absolutely interdicted it. Does not the council of Trent authorize us to allow those to read it whom we judge to be in a state to profit by it?"

"Let all the people, let everybody read it then, for if there is one thing which the Fathers appeared to lay down clearly, it is precisely this, that the Scripture is written for all, good for all, necessary for all."

"Other times, other laws."

"Undoubtedly; but in this case we ought to be able to forget how the law came to be made. It was an after-thought; it was when the resuscitated Bible menaced the institutions, the doctrines, the very existence of your church, that you concluded to forbid it. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when it was less read than ever, still there was no law yet made to forbid the reading of it. In the sixteenth, when it accidentally fell into the hands of Luther, Luther then broke no law in reading it. The council was held, and the prohibition given; a bold but dangerous admission of that which we have repeated to you for two centuries past, namely, that you cannot stand before the Bible, and that there will forever be a mortal enmity between it and you. You *allow* those to read it, you say, whom you judge to be in a state to profit by it. But even if

all your colleagues should do the same,—which they do not,—even if there were not, on the contrary, a very great number of them who do not study it themselves,—yet, is it enough only to *allow* it? What should you think of a curé who *allowed* his people to go to mass, to confess, to commune? What would Augustine, Jerome, Chrysostom, have thought of a priest of their day who confined himself to *allowing* what they recommended with so much earnestness, to the ignorant as well as the learned, to the poor as well as the rich? 'Other times other laws,' you say. I know that these same Fathers complained occasionally of the errors to which this liberty was liable; but what conclusion did they draw from it? That the faithful must be deprived of it? No. The only remedy which occurred to them for the mistakes which might occur in reading the Bible, was a more frequent and more attentive perusal of it. And, on the other hand, there is nothing more embarrassing for a defender of your church than the very nature of the differences of which they complained. How comes it that among these heresiarchs, who might be numbered by hundreds, and who so profoundly discussed all questions of discipline and doctrine, none attacked those which were attacked by the reformers? Why do we not see those who carried independence so far as to declare it unlimited, and without law of any kind, attacking *confession?* Why do not those who wished to have no clergy attack the pope? Why do not those who wish to have their worship without any ceremony whatever speak of abolishing the mass? Those who declared Christ to be a simple doctor,—why do not they make mention of the refusal of their homage to the Virgin? Let this be explained, or I must be allowed to conclude that in the early ages there was neither pope, nor confession, nor mass, nor anything of the kind;—for you, I imagine, are not one of those who dare to

assert that if these things were not attacked, it was because they were then universally admitted, and beyond all dispute."

"We do not deny," said Bridaine, "that certain doctrines and practices have, in course of time, received a wider development than at the period of their origin. But you forget that, on the other hand, we contend for a perpetual intervention of God in all that is said or done by the church. These developments, accordingly, are as true, as sacred as the foundation. Even if you prove that we are not exactly what we were fifteen or sixteen centuries ago, what will you gain by it? Because a man is more developed at thirty than at twenty, will you dispute his right to present himself as the same individual, to bear the same name, to inherit the same patrimony?"

"No," said Rabaut; "I will deny him nothing which he has indisputably possessed from his birth, or in virtue of his birth; but I must ask to see his title to anything additional which he may claim. Where is your title? Can we reasonably permit you to say, 'Believe, for the church is infallible?' In order to believe, upon her own assertion, in her infallibility, it must first be believed that she is not mistaken in this assertion. If I am not persuaded of this beforehand, what good will her assertion do me? If you have titles, they are not, they cannot, in fact, be anywhere but in the Bible. If all other rights were yours, you have at least no right to conceal these titles from those who wish to see them with their own eyes before believing in them."

"To conceal them, no; but the right to keep them out of the hands of those who would not be able to read them with profit, is given us by reason itself. Do you ask a father by what right he takes from his children those books which, in his opinion, they cannot read with safety?"

"You move in a circle, and there is no subject which does

not immediately bring your Church, if she be a little pressed, back to the same point. As soon as you reason, you not only lose all your advantages, but you place yourselves necessarily outside of all the rules of logic. A debate of any kind whatsoever, supposes the possibility of a defeat; but you are forced to announce beforehand that you will not yield, that you cannot yield. All debate is thus on your part an illusion; the only part which you can play in accordance with your principles, is that of ordering, of constraining. Accordingly, nothing is more confused, nothing more equivocal, than the regulations made at Trent on the subject of the reading and interpretation of the sacred books. They dared not positively interdict it; they could not permit it. It was necessary to give with one hand, and take back with the other. Nothing can be more curious than the discussions to which the preparation of the decree gave rise; and the decree had scarcely appeared, before it was pronounced at Rome still too liberal. Three months after the close of the council, Pius IV. interpreted it as an almost absolute prohibition; and it is not ten years since the inquisitor-general* dared to write, 'Some men have carried their audacity to the *execrable extremity*'—of reading the Bible? No,—'*of asking permission* to read the Bible!' Thus it is in Spain, the *most Catholic* kingdom. Is it different elsewhere? You cannot mention a country in which your church does not employ against the Bible all her available power and influence. Where she allows it to be read, it is only because she cannot prevent it. Where she can still burn those who read it, she does so. Where she can only burn the Bible itself—"

Bridaine started. Rabaut paused a few seconds.

"Conscience has spoken," he resumed. "I see that I have touched a sore spot in your heart. Courage, my friend! Take

* Perez del Prado, 1750.

out those two leaves which I saw you pick up in the court of the palace,—for I was there, you know."

He took them out.

The book which had been torn and burnt by the hand of the hangman, in the year of grace 1760, at Paris, in company with the *Esprit* of Helvétius, the *Human Plant* of Lamettrie, and the *Chinese Letters* of d'Argens, was—the New Testament.

XXXI.

THE BOOK WHICH WAS BURNT IN THE COURT OF THE PALACE.—CHOOSING A TEXT.—SUPREME AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH.

And the three sat there motionless, contemplating with various emotions these two leaves, torn, blackened, soiled with mud.

With Bridaine the emotion was one of confusion, of shame; it was the painful dejection of a man condemned to submit to an obligation against which his heart revolts. He did not acknowledge himself conquered, but he had no longer strength, nor courage, nor wish to combat.

With Rabaut it was a mingling of pity for his adversary, indignation against an impious despotism, and, above all, love for this sacred book so insultingly profaned. He would have wished to kiss these pages, as the sacred remains of the martyrs of old were reverently kissed among the ashes of the stake.

And with his friend it was indignation of a cooler sort, as well as the pity of a thoughtful man for those who imagined that by burning a little paper, they could arrest the flight of conscience and of thought.

"Give me these leaves," said the minister, at length. "I will keep them as a souvenir of my journey to Paris."

"Here they are," said the priest. "But no; not yet. I wish to read them; I wish also that they should serve me, as—I am going to preach in a few days."

"Well?"

"I will take my text from them."

Bridaine was glad of this kind of expiation which had occurred to him. He joined thereby, as far as a Catholic could, in the sorrow of having seen the Bible burned; he offered to God and to the two Protestants a reparation for the outrage upon the sacred book.

He even wished to go farther. "Help me to choose one," he said.

They took one of the two leaves. There was a fragment from the book of Acts.

"I will read," said Rabaut. "Give it to me.

"'—— *they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews.**

"'*And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures*—'"

Rabaut paused without raising his eyes. Gebelin smiled. And, in fact, after the discussion which had just taken place, these last words were strangely pointed.

"'*Opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead.*'"

Then came several illegible lines.

"'—— *they drew certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.*'"

"They were really very foolish," said Gebelin. "Why did they not quietly follow the religion of their fathers? What folly to wish to change what had been in existence for so many

* Acts, xvii.

centuries! The Jewish Church, moreover, had received the most magnificent promises from God. What temerity to suppose it degenerate, and capable of being mistaken!"

"Are we to re-commence our discussion?" asked the missionary.

"I beg pardon—I had forgotten."

"Those who are persecuted," said Rabaut, "find it difficult not to seize, especially in the Scriptures, all that may appear to them an allusion to their misfortunes."

"Pardon," repeated Gebelin. "And yet, since the subject was mentioned, permit me to ask whether the comparison which I hinted at has never presented itself to your mind? You enumerate promises which indicate, according to you, that your church cannot be wrong; and that, consequently, when she condemns us, we are justly and fitly condemned. I do not wish at this moment to discuss these promises. I admit that it is to you, to you alone, that they are and can be addressed. But the Jews received far more magnificent ones—"

"For a time."

"Agreed; but allow me to finish. They received much clearer promises, I say, since there was no one among them who dreamed of doubting; whilst there have always been, even before our day, some Christians who did not interpret as you do, the aid promised to the church. These promises, moreover, had been confirmed by facts. God had presided visibly, as it were, over the destiny of His people; He had not ceased to watch, not only in the ordinary way, but by special ministers, by prophets, over the purity of the faith preached by Moses. Thus the Jews had all the reasons for believing in the infallibility of their church, which you have for believing in the infallibility of yours; they had them corroborated by the history of many ages, during which the Divine

manifestation had been plain and incontrovertible. This assurance, you say, was only for a time. Yes; but it was to last at least until the moment when they should pass under another law. When the body of doctors denied that Jesus was the Christ, what sign was there that they were not the only and true directors of the nation? None. Nothing had yet announced that the primitive promises were not still in force. And yet they were grossly mistaken. You also,—even if there were ages when you could not be mistaken,—you may be mistaken now; and if the high priest erred in not receiving the Christian law, may not the bishop of Rome have erred in anathematizing Luther and his companions? So that—"

"Do not urge the question," said Rabaut. "He could not read a line which would not furnish materials for observations of this kind. I continue.

"'—— *and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar*—'"

But Court again interrupted.

"Yes; not a line, in fact, in this picture of the persecutions of those days, which does not seem written for us, and against the laws which oppress us. 'They do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar,' was said at Rome. 'They do contrary to the decrees of the king,' you repeat in France; and thereupon—"

"I never have thought it right," said Bridaine, "that civil authority should intervene in matters of faith."

"You condemn persecution?"

"I abhor it."

"God be praised! Here is at least one. But how, then, how can you remain the minister and friend of a church which persecutes? How, at least, can you help rebelling against the horrors with which she pollutes herself?"

"Monsieur Rabaut has seen me at work among the Protestants of Languedoc. Let him say whether I had recourse to—"

"No," replied Rabaut, "but you do not answer. You preached indulgence, it is true; you did not wish, you said, any other weapon but persuasion; but you knew very well that before you, behind you, on each side of you were men animated by very different principles. You knew that these Protestants to whom you never addressed yourself otherwise than as brothers, were treated like enemies, like slaves, like the offscouring of humanity. When and to whom have you ever said plainly that there should be freedom of conscience, that God alone has the power and the right to direct it, that it is an abuse and a sacrilege to come between God and conscience? When and to whom have you ever said—but pardon! It is not you but your Church who must be appealed to. The employment of force is a necessary, inevitable, *fatal* consequence of the principles which she has laid down. As soon as she no longer has power in her hands, as soon as, for one reason or another, she ceases to employ it, what is she more than any other church? As soon as she talks of reasoning, of persuading, of convincing, what is Rome more than Geneva?"

"And her unity?" said Bridaine, "and the co-operation of so many millions of men?"

"In a worldly point of view it is clear that the position is a much better one. You undoubtedly possess all that would make those who are disposed to receive a religion ready made, cast themselves into your arms rather than into those of our ministers. What I meant to say, and what you will not deny, is that constraint once done away with, a reflecting man feels himself immediately as free in respect to your instructions as ours. Unity, numbers, seniority, all these are nothing more than a presumption in your favor, it is true, but which cannot be weighed against arguments, against facts. I repeat it; do away with constraint and you have nothing more than we have.

Is it not proved at this very time? We have been discussing with you for nearly an hour. Have you found that the unity, the infallibility of your Church have given you any advantage over us? Have you even endeavored by argument to convince us of this unity, this infallibility? These latter are no arguments, as you must feel, except with those already convinced or disposed to be so without examination. In themselves they prove nothing, for they themselves must always be proved in the first place, and then we are again on those grounds of logical reasoning, to which nothing else has a right to resort but simple good sense and history. If we had given up just now, would it have been because you are the organ of one Church rather than another? By no means. We would have yielded to your reasons, that is to say, to the authority of reason, not to that of a man or of a Church. If we do not yield, if your reasons appear to us insufficient, what can you do more than any other doctor? What can your Church do? There is no medium: she must either leave us in peace,—or persecute us. And in this, permit me to remark, we see the first chastisement of her pride. She must be exclusive, intolerant, and cruel,—or else she immediately descends to the level of those sects of which she speaks with so much contempt. She cannot remain what she is without constantly compromising herself yet more in the eyes of humanity and reason; she cannot change without forswearing herself."

"Toleration, I see," said Bridaine, "would not find you very grateful."

"We would be very grateful towards the men who might grant us toleration, although, strictly speaking, there is no occasion to be grateful for the cessation of an injustice; as for your Church, there is no likelihood of her furnishing us, of her own free will, an opportunity of being ungrateful."

"How do you know? A pamphlet has recently appeared—"

"The *Conciliator*, you mean?"

"Yes. You would subscribe to it almost entirely."

"That is true."

"Do you know by whom it was written?"

"Not by a priest, certainly."

"You are mistaken. It is by the abbé de Brienne, grand vicar of the archbishop of Rouen."

"Indeed? Well, let us wait until he becomes archbishop himself. If he persists I shall confess myself vanquished."

"You are inexorable."

"It is because I know with whom we have to deal. You have no lack of those young priests, who half from liberality, half from infidelity,* emulate each other as to who shall be most tolerant. But once in possession of office, and what has become of all this fine talk? Within a few years, many of those who were most distinguished in the saloons of Paris for the breadth and generosity of their views, have risen to the episcopal dignity. What have they done for us? Or rather what have they not done against us? It is quite simple. As soon as a man becomes one of the heads of the church, he must deny her tenets, or do as she does. After the frightful anathemas with which your popes have loaded us, what bishops could treat us as brethren? After the encouragement given by your Church to those sovereigns who persecute us, after the pompous eulogiums so often showered by her upon those who have done us the most injury, who, without condemning her, could blame that which she has so often counselled, so often ordered, so often commended! No, no! We shall never obtain anything from her. If toleration is to be established, it will not be without

* The abbé de Brienne was closely connected with the abbé de Morellet.

her having struggled till the last moment to maintain intolerance. If peace be established, the Church may submit to it; but as to extending her hand to it, never!"

XXXII.

INTOLERANCE OF THE CLERGY.

Was Gebelin too severe? It might be thought so then, especially in the presence of Bridaine; but events have proved that he was but too correct. It is known that the clergy struggled to the very last, against the tolerant views of Louis XVI. and his council. And as for this very abbé Brienne, (the author of the pamphlet on toleration,) he thus expresses himself after becoming an archbishop, in an address to this king upon the occasion of his coronation, when he had been made to swear, according to custom, "*honestly* to exterminate all heretics."

"You will reject, Sire, the counsels of a false peace, the systems of a guilty toleration. We implore you to do so; do not delay to deprive error of the hope of having temples and altars among us; complete the work begun by Louis the Great, and continued by Louis the Well-beloved. It is reserved for you to give the finishing stroke to Calvinism in your kingdom. Order that the assemblies of the Protestants shall be dispersed. Exclude sectarians without distinction from all branches of the public administration; and you will assure to your subjects the unity of a true Christian worship."

XXXIII.

BRIDAINE CHOOSES HIS TEXT.—UNIVERSAL DIFFUSION OF KNOWLEDGE AFTER THE REFORMATION.

"God will judge," said Bridaine.

"God will judge," said Rabaut. "Let us continue.

"'*And they troubled the people, and the rulers of the city when they heard those things.*

"'*And when they had taken security of Jason and of the other, they let them go.*

"'*And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea, who coming thither, went into the synagogue of the Jews.*

"'*These were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily whether these things were so.*'"

Rabaut without pausing, had emphasized these last words.

"Well?" said Gebelin.

"Well?" said the missionary.

"I will not ask you," continued Gebelin, "for it would be almost a sarcasm, if you will take that for a text; but let me ask you once more, seriously, fraternally, what you make of these lines. Here are people to whom it does not appear as if even an apostle should be believed on his mere assertion; here is the companion of the labors of the apostle Saint Luke, author of the book of Acts, who is not contented with looking upon it as very natural, but who praises them very highly for it. They believed, but only when they found in the Scriptures—"

"In what Scriptures, if you please? In the Old Testament,

in the prophecies which predicted Jesus Christ. Nothing more natural, as you say, than to consult them, since their object was to aid the Jews in recognizing the Messiah. Is it the same with the New Testament? Are the books which it contains of such a nature that their contents can and must be known only by reading them? Have you not yourselves, in your churches, people who do not read them? People who do not know how to read?"

"As for the last, we have scarcely any of them; and it is no small praise to the Reformation, be it said *en passant*, that it has done so much from its very commencement for the instruction of the masses. 'Where two or three could read before,' says Luther, somewhere, 'you will now scarcely find two or three who cannot.' And if it were not so, what would that prove? Is a law just and good only provided every one chooses to profit by it? Because in a Church there are people who do not know how to read, and who do not care to know, shall this Church have the right to exact that I shall accept as they do, a religion ready made, and that I shall give up the right to examine it? Confess, my friend, confess that you are ill at ease when you are forced to give to intelligent, conscientious, reflecting men, such reasons as these! Are you perchance ignorant with what vigor they were refuted in the early ages by these same writers whose authority in all other matters appears to you so high and so holy? A folio volume might be made of all that they have said upon this subject. There is one sermon especially, of Chrysostom, which one might believe written by a Protestant of our day, so clearly and directly does it reply to the objections made to us. 'When we receive money,' he says, 'we wish to count it ourselves; and when things divine are at stake, shall we shut our eyes and seize the offered opinions of others? Consult then the Scriptures.' But they

are not plain enough. 'The Holy Spirit, he continues, 'has confided the writing of them to unlettered men, in order that all, even the most ignorant, may understand and profit by the Word.' But have we time to occupy ourselves with these things? 'Let no one present these miserable pretexts to me; I must gain a livelihood; I must bring up my children. It is not for me to read the Scriptures, but for those who have retired from the business of the age. Poor man! Is it because thou art distracted by a thousand cares, that it is not thy business to read the word of God? Why thou hast far more need of it than those who have retired from the world to give all their time to God.' Thus speaks Chrysostom. Do you find one of the Fathers who does not say about the same,—one who has preached from the Bible without recommending and prescribing the reading of it,—one, in short, who has put any other restrictions to this right, to this *duty*, rather,—than the obligation to read it with attention and respect? No, no! no more of these idle reasons in which you yourself do not believe. The true, the only reason is, that you are afraid of the Bible."

"Afraid! Good God!" cried Bridaine. "Afraid of the Bible!"

"Not you, as a Christian," said Rabaut. "Certainly not. I know well enough that you love it; I know with what admirable vigor you set forth its instructions. But it is one thing to talk of it in the pulpit, and another to place it in the hands of the faithful. In the pulpit, when you can quote it in support of your assertions, you do so; when you cannot, you let it pass, but you do not say that you cannot. The hearer who has confidence in you, supposes always that you can. Never having seen the book as a whole, he imagines it containing in the plainest manner, all that you teach him; he cannot

doubt that these things all occupy a place in it, proportionate to the importance which they have in your Church. This is an error which the sincerest among you are forced to abstain from correcting. Thus every priest, even the most disposed to love, to quote the Bible, and to communicate all its pages one after the other to his flock, is necessarily afraid of putting it into their hands entire. He feels that they would not find it what they must imagine it to be, from the instructions and practices of the Church; he is alarmed to think what great gaps the most submissive of the faithful, if he reflect a little, cannot fail to find in it. But for the last time let us go on. —I do not ask you to answer.—I ask no justification.—We are not your judges.—God will judge, as you said just now.—Let us continue."

"Go on."

"Ah! here is half a page entirely illegible. It was the discourse of Saint Paul in the Areopagus. Shall we take the other?"

"No; I said that I would take my text from this leaf."

"But there is nothing more.—Ah! yes,—here is one more verse.

"*Because God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world.*"

XXXIV.

DUTIES OF PREACHERS AND HEARERS.

"That is it!" exclaimed the missionary. "That sums up admirably what I have to say to these fine lords, to these grand ladies, who look upon it as a merry-making, I am told, to come and hear me preach! I will make them perceive, at least once, in its most terrible aspect, that religion which they make,

or which is made for them, so large, so easy, so convenient. I was hesitating; was asking myself if I would not do better to avoid such a sensation. But no.—I am decided. It is the will of God. He has spoken to me by this leaf."

"Good," said Rabaut; "it is well, brother! I love to see this confidence and earnestness. What should we poor laborers for the Lord do, if we did not feel ourselves from time to time under His immediate direction? Go,—speak. It is He who sends you to this crowd of brilliant sinners."

"Perhaps so. But He has sent so many others to them,—and so many others have failed!"

"Discouraged already?"

"No. But every time that I go into the pulpit, I cannot help asking myself, What will remain in a month, in a week, in a few hours, of the discourse which is to be listened to? What, after all, am I going to do, I think to myself, if not to render almost all my audience more guilty? They know all that I am going to tell them. They have been a thousand times reproved for the same things in regard to which I am now going to reprove them. They have promised a thousand times all that I am now going to make them promise. O lamentable dissimulation, where He who is deceived is God!"

"Alas!" said the minister, "how many times have I thought the same thing within myself! I am less exposed than you, it is true, to preach to an audience who come for form's sake. I scarcely preach to any people but those who, in addition to our habitual perils, must brave cold, heat, rain, snow, and distance, in order to hear me. Even if all these sacrifices did not prepare their hearts to receive religious impressions, it would still be natural that they should endeavor to profit by a sermon so dearly bought. But unhappily, in the country as in the city, beneath the vault of heaven as well as beneath those of

your temples, human nature is, and always has been, the same. I also have often asked myself whether, in preaching to those who listened little or carelessly, I ought not to fear aggravating their responsibility in the sight of God. But what is to be done? Must we give up preaching the gospel? Must we soften it so much, that our hearers, in violating it, shall be as little guilty as possible? God forbid! And yet I think that there is a way of profiting by your remark; I think that the preacher, without weakening any of the commands or threats of the word of God, can and ought to avoid a too frequent presentation of those to which he positively knows that his hearers will pay but little attention. It is a sort of charity, which, like all others, may degenerate into weakness; but it should not on that account be given up. I do not like to hear death, the judgment, and hell, brought forward on every occasion.

'*Nec Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus,*'

I will willingly say with Horace. Not that the thought of God and of eternity ought not to breathe forth from your smallest words. Let it hover unceasingly above your audience, but always too high for them to grow familiar with the holy terrors which accompany it. It is only a poor commander who would bring forward the whole of his army on every occasion. Nothing leads more surely to success than to know, on all occasions, exactly what energy and force to employ."

"And yet," observed Bridaine, "this precept is perhaps more correct in rhetoric than in religion. There are no little sins, strictly speaking. All displease God, if not equally, at least sufficiently to prevent any true Christian from ever saying to himself, 'This is one from which it is not worth while to abstain.' But that which true Christians do not say, the

wicked, who are the great majority, have a great inclination to say. If they at last perceive that you reserve your threatenings for sins of a graver sort, will they not feel themselves more and more authorized to think that there are little sins, which leads immediately to the conclusion that they may be committed without fear of consequences?"

"Your remark is correct," said Rabaut. "I may even add, that it astonishes me to hear it from your lips, and that this is another point in regard to which, you without knowing it, are better than your Church. Nothing can be more unchristian, as you said, than the division of sins into trivial and important; but what else in reality is your division of them into *venial and mortal?* However that may be, to return to your idea, I think that it would in fact be very dangerous in certain cases, to manifest an intention to allow the great terrors of the law to rest undisturbed. But it is one thing to soften them, to cover them, to be false in short, to the ministry,—and another to abstain from scattering them too plentifully at the risk of leading people to pay no more attention to them. A preacher who can do nothing without having recourse to this extremity, is like the wagoner held fast in the mud, who invokes the gods, instead of disengaging his wheels; or if you choose, he is like him who cannot hold his whip without cracking it every moment, so that his horses at length take no more notice of it. Once having adopted this style, it is difficult to abandon it. It is only the most violent efforts which still from time to time gain some little attention, and produce some few results. These great resources which have been so miserably worn out must then be rejuvenated by grandiose expressions; this paltry mixture of a merely human style, will destroy the little of true grandeur which may have remained."

"I believe in truth," added Bridaine, "that when we com-

plain of the little impression produced by the grandest ideas, we ought often to begin by seeing if it is not more or less our own fault. A cook,—(excuse me the comparison,—it will go with that of the wagoner;—) a cook, I say, who saw the finest and most highly-seasoned dishes received with indifference, would doubtless have reason to complain of the guests; but he would be very wrong at the same time, to put himself out of the question, and not to inquire in what respect he himself may have contributed to the ill success of which he complains. To return to ourselves, I believe nothing would be more instructive than an examination of this sort. It would be a new, interesting, and eminently practical manner of studying pulpit eloquence.

"I understand," said the minister. "A conscientious preacher cannot fail to have sometimes, by instinct, followed the method you mention; but the study would gain by being systematized. In place of proceeding, as is generally the case, from the rules to their application, we should go from the application to the rules; in place of asking what must be done, we should analyse what we have done; in short, instead of discussing the results to be obtained, we should examine those that have been obtained, and according to what is lacking in these, we may perceive what has been faulty in our manner of proceeding. It would be the best method of keeping constantly in view not only the secondary and conventional object of writing more or less correct, or more or less eloquent sermons; but the true and only object, that of instructing or regenerating. Let us not ask, 'what must I say in order to persuade them?' but, 'what would be necessary to persuade me.' A true preacher beholds himself seated among his audience. For him, the first sinner to be condemned, is himself. This position, I know, is difficult to take, difficult to keep."

"Almost impossible," said the missionary; "and this, when I examine myself in the presence of God, is one of my chief subjects of confusion. How many times, after a long and vehement sermon, have I suddenly perceived that I had taken none of it to myself; that it had not even entered my mind to do so! How many times have I not even perceived this omission! And how can we be surprised, after that, that others quit the church as we do the pulpit! Always the story of the mote and the beam, alas! We complain that we are unheeded by our hearers, and we do not even heed ourselves."

"Or we heed ourselves too much."

"It is the same thing: forgetfulness of the substance is closely connected with an undue attention to the form. Here, surely, we are not altogether in fault. However able or pious a preacher may be, he must pay more or less attention to his words, his phrases. If he extemporizes, he must seek them; if he recites, he must recollect them. But what preacher can boast of never having given more attention to the form of his discourse than was strictly necessary? Who will assert that he has never sought in the looks and motions of his audience the human and worldly effects of his words? Ah! we say often enough, in theory, that we must desire the safety of souls before all else; but even among those whose chief aim it is, find me one who has not frequently been more occupied with his human than his spiritual success, and more pained by the failure of one sermon than the fruitlessness of twenty others!"

"Gentlemen," said Gebelin, "reassure yourselves. These are things in regard to which, if a man feels his weakness, that very fact makes him strong. Socrates was right in believing himself to have learned much, when he had learned to know that he knew nothing. And that which he said of human wisdom, the gospel authorizes us to say of the wisdom of God.

Christian perfection in all things is less to be perfect, than to feel conscious of our imperfections. As for myself, if I did not already know that you are perhaps the most worthy in this age to speak in the name of God,—what I have just heard would be sufficient to convince me."

"Enough!" they exclaimed.

"Enough," repeated the minister. "Since, according to your own opinion, it is our humility which constitutes our only merit, do not deprive us of it by praises on which our poor hearts are but too much inclined to feast themselves. Let us rather continue our reading. You have a text, Monsieur. It is now my turn."

XXXV.

RABAUT'S TEXT.—ROMAN FISCAL CODE.

"Your turn?" said the missionary, astonished.

"Yes, I wish one also. I read for you, read now for me."

"Shall we discuss, as we go on?"

"Why not?"

"Because we have discussed only too much already."

"Are we less friends than before?"

"I hope not."

"You hope? *I* am sure."

Bridaine took the other leaf and read:

"——' *Go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**

"'*And as ye go, preach, saying, the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.*

"'*Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give.*'"

He stopped, and smiled.

* Gospel according to Saint Matthew. Chapter X.

"If I had not picked up these leaves myself," he said, "I would believe that you had selected them."

"Is there then any necessity that we should select," said Gebelin, "in order to stumble upon things which your Church would like better to forget?"

"Come," replied Bridaine, "I await the tempest."

"It will not be a very severe one," said Rabaut; "you expect too violent an attack, for I see from your manner that you are no partisan of the Roman fiscal code, and that you like not to see those sell, whose master said to them, 'Give.'"

"Yes, I confess it. If I had to order a reformation, I think I should begin there, for there is nothing which does more injury to religion, to the priests—"

"To the priests doubtless, but more especially to religion. I do not speak of the attacks to which this system exposes it from infidels, mockers and superficial men. Those are either allowed to say what they will, or are required to observe, that it is necessary the priest should live; that if they wish to pay nothing, they are free, etc. But there is a graver aspect; it is the moral degradation of religion, in the minds even of those who pay without complaining, and who see nothing evil in the custom of paying. One is confounded to perceive how completely holy things become, in their eyes, a merchandize like any other; but the final consequence of these perpetual purchases, from baptism to burial, from the confessional to purgatory, is the opinion,—not actually taught by you, but none the less profoundly engraved upon the hearts of multitudes,—that salvation may be purchased, and that the only necessity, in fact, is to pay well for it. I do not enter, you perceive, upon the irritating side of the question. I do not say, that your priests receive by this means most exorbitant revenues; I assert, that of all the means of providing for the maintenance of

worship and of its ministers, this is the least compatible with the true interests of religion and the true dignity of the ministry. The evil is not that recourse should have been had to it at periods when it was perhaps necessary; but that it should not have been abandoned as soon and as universally as possible, that it should no longer be felt how vicious and fatal the system is."

"I have shown you what I feel in regard to it," said Bridaine. "I shall now continue.

"'*And whosoever shall not receive you nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.*

"'*Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be ye—*'"

"You do not stop there?" interrupted Rabaut. "If you but knew how much we love, in the midst of all our sufferings, to read these words of our Saviour to His disciples! All these gloomy prophecies, with which He mingled the glimpses of His grace, are seized by us as so many appeals to our zeal, and aids to us in our misery. 'Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves!' How many a time I have said it, in the name of my Master, to the poor flocks lost among so many adversaries, to the poor shepherds upon whom I, their brother, laid my hands, sending them to their work with almost the certainty that they were going to meet their death! Listen. In eighteen months, if I live, I have to officiate at one of these ceremonies. I have a new sheep to send forth among your wolves. It is my son. I shall preach on that day. This shall be my text."

They looked at one another with deep emotion. Bridaine could scarcely restrain his tears.

"Give me my leaf," said Rabaut. "Here is yours. On Monday then—"

"You are coming to hear me preach again?"

"Certainly. And you, shall you ever hear me?"

"I hear you?"

"Why not?"

"But when?"

"When I preach from this text which you have given me."

"But where?"

"I do not know."

"But, then—"

"God will order it. Adieu, I am going to see your prisoner."

Rabaut departed, and a short time after, Bridaine quitted Gebelin.

XXXVI.

THE KING'S GAMBLING MONEY.—WINES.—THE OLD ELMS.—RICHELIEU'S IDEAS IN REGARD TO THE SUPREME AUTHORITY OF KINGS.

Two or three days after this conversation, if we had been permitted to enter the smaller apartments of the chateau of Versailles, we should have found towards evening, in the same room, seated upon the same arm-chairs, beside the same chimney-piece, the two men whom we have already seen there on a former occasion.

Now, as then, they had just returned from a walk in the gardens; now, as then, one of them had exhausted for the entertainment of the other, all that the court and city could furnish of anecdotes, news, and little or great scandals; now, as then, the one had become weary of listening, the other of relat-

ing, and *ennui*, after having followed them step by step among the marvels of Le Nôtre and Marigny, had come and installed itself before them beneath the shelter of the palace.

The king, however, was even sadder and more ennuyé than usual. The marquise de Pompadour had thought proper to celebrate her sudden return to favor by a number of brilliant fêtes. The château of Bellevue had been illuminated; the old royal forests, so silent and solitary since the king no longer went to the chase, had echoed with the sound of the horn, the baying of the hounds, and the brisk gallop of the horses through the pathways overgrown with bushes. But all these sounds had failed to awaken an echo in the desolate heart of the monarch. These gaily spent days only served to increase the vacancy within; and although he had beforehand, but little expectation of any other results, still he had groaned in secret to find no other. Thus it is that the invalid declares in vain, that he has no faith in the efforts made to save him; it is still with a painful stupefaction that he beholds his prediction confirmed.

In this state in which nothing can quiet his anguish, the thing most calculated to increase it, is that there should still be a remedy which occurs to him, but of which he is obliged to deprive himself.

This painful increase of misery, the king had felt for some days.

The emotions excited by gaming had been from his childhood one of his resources against his incurable *ennui;* but he had been obliged to increase them gradually, like the drinker who must have his wines stronger and stronger. For some years past, mountains of gold had alone been able to stimulate him sufficiently to prevent him from becoming as weary of this as of everything else. He generally lost; and as his dignity exacted that in case he won he should restore in some other

form all that he had gained,—his *gambling funds*, as they were called, formed one of the heaviest expenses of his private budget.

Now the comptroller-general Monsieur de Silhouette, had just required the suppression of this, either in order to lighten general expenses or in order to authorize more important suppressions. The king had submitted; but he suffered very much from it, and every day increased his suffering.

After having done his best to enliven him, Richelieu had finished by holding his peace and sulking a little. These were his usual tactics in order to force him to listen a little better, or to gain his consent to some new *pleasure*, that is to say, some new *ennui*. We saw that it aided him, the preceding week, to bring the king once more under the old dominion of the marquise. And on these occasions it was always the king who took the first step.

"Richelieu," he said, "what are you thinking about?"

"I? nothing," replied the marshal. "I am too good a servant of your Majesty, ever to occupy myself otherwise than you do."

"Here is a new sort of flattery! When I see you committing a folly I am to conclude that I have just committed one also? But you are mistaken, Richelieu! No; I was very far from thinking of nothing. Tell me, Monsieur the governor of Guyenne, is there any drinkable wine in the Bordelais country?"

It often happened that the poor king cut short his sad thoughts by seizing abruptly upon a subject which had, for that matter, always been a favorite one of the Bourbons. From father to son, this race eat and drank largely and with relish, and it was no jest that among the three talents attributed by the old song to Henry IV., their ancestor, was numbered that

of a "good drinker." None of them, however, with the exception of the regent, had carried it to excess; but what was not *excess* for them would have been so for many others. Louis XIV. at the summit of his glory, and Louis XVI. surrounded by his gaolers, submitted equally to the laws of their imperious appetite. It was still more natural that it should reign despotically over a prince who had neither the distractions of glory, nor the preoccupations of misfortune.

The duke was accordingly not surprised at this curious interpellation. The governors were accustomed to hear themselves questioned in regard to the best productions of their provinces, and it would have been dangerous for any one coming from Perigord to neglect the collection of all possible information in regard to the truffle crop.

It is true that the governor of Guyenne might have known at this period, but little of the wines belonging to his jurisdiction. To the shame of the fashion, be it said, the laughing hills of the Bordelais had until now been little noticed. Neither the king nor any one else at Versailles had in all probability ever tasted their productions. He did not even ask if the wine were good, but whether it was drinkable.

Happily, Richelieu, who was unceasingly upon the track of something new, in gastronomy as in all else, had made a tolerably profound examination of the subject.

"Sire," he replied, "they have what they call white Sauterne, which, though far from being so good as that of Monrachet, or that of the little slopes in Burgundy, is still not to be despised. There is also a certain wine from Grave which smacks of the flint like an old carabine. It resembles Moselle wine but keeps better. They have besides in Médoc and Bazadois, two or three sorts of red wine, of which they boast a great deal. It is nectar fit for the gods, if one is to believe

them; yet it is certainly not comparable to the wine of Upper Burgundy. Its flavor is not bad, however, and it has an indescribable sort of dull saturine acid which is not disagreeable. Besides, one can drink as much as one will. It puts people to sleep and that is all."

"It puts people to sleep?" said the king. "Send for a pipe of it."

"I will write for it this evening, sire."

"By the way, they say that the Bordelais are furiously angry at you."

"At me! And pray why?"

"Certain trees were mentioned—"

"They have not yet done with that? What memories these provincials have!"

"What was it about these trees? I do not exactly recollect."

"Some old elms, sire, which were to be cut down to make room for a magnificent theatre. The aldermen opposed it; the citizens, in order to provoke me, took sides with the aldermen. The matter must be brought to an end. So, one fine morning, the trees are found lying on the ground. Thereupon, as your Majesty may well imagine, a grand uproar was raised; but in the meantime, my ground was ready, and the theatre was built. Did I not do them a service?"

"Perhaps so; but it was their right, I think, to refuse. A governor—"

"A governor, sire, is your representative,—is the king."

"And have I the right to cut down the trees in a city which do not belong to me?"

"You certainly have that of cutting off the heads in it."

"After judgment."

"After and before."

"Indeed? Suppose you go and say that to the gentlemen of the parliament."

"And I would say it to their faces, confound them, the impudent lawyers! What, sire! are you too going to fancy that your power has limits? Who established these parliaments? In whose name do they judge? Are not you, in France, the supreme and only judge? These gentlemen are simply your councillors in matters of justice, just as your councillors of state and your ministers are in executive matters. Are you bound by the decisions of your ministers? Are you even obliged to consult them? No, sire, no! Your power has no other bounds than those which you choose to put to it. The laws and ordinances by which judgment is regulated were made by yourself and your predecessors. You can modify them, change them, abolish them. They only exist in you, as do the bodies which use them. Take a bit of paper, and write upon it, 'No more parliaments.' Sign it,—and there will be no longer any parliaments."

The old duke could understand no jesting upon the subject of royalty. He was, in fact, supported by history. The king was the supreme and only judge. No limit was found to his power, the fixing of which, upon going back, was not to be found in this power itself. We still regard with admiration Louis IX. personally administering justice beneath the oak at Vincennes. What did he do but exercise, as a father, it is true, but still exercise the most terrible and absolute authority?

Louis XV. liked well enough, in theory, these doctrines which asserted that there was no reason why a king of France should not be a despot, after the manner of the sultans, if it pleased him. Practically, he was afraid. His weakness, aided by a sufficient quantity of common sense, permitted him to see the too logical absurdity. It was not until ten years after,

when the parliaments consolidated their pretensions to be of themselves something in the state, into a system, that he ventured to make a solemn appeal to ancient facts and principles. On the seventh of December, 1770, all the parliament of Paris being at his order met together, clothed in crimson robes, in the saloon of the guards, at Versailles, he made his appearance in all the splendor of royal majesty. The parliament, standing and uncovered, was to listen and be silent. "Messieurs," said the chancellor Maupeou, "his Majesty must believe that you will receive with submission a law containing the true principles, etc.* Go back to the first institution of the parliaments, follow them in their progress. You will see that they receive their existence and power from the king alone, and that the plenitude of power resides always in the hand which has communicated it. They are neither an emanation nor a part one of the others. The authority which created them circumscribes their jurisdiction, and fixes its subjects as well as its extent. Charged with the application of the laws, it is not for you either to extend or restrict their stipulations. When the law-giver wishes to manifest his will, you are his organ, and his goodness permits you to be his council. There your ministry ends. The king weighs your observations; he judges of the advantages or disadvantages of the law; and if he then commands, you owe him the most perfect submission. If your rights were more widely extended, you would no longer be his officers, but his masters, etc."

* The edict which the parliament had refused to register contained three principal stipulations:

1st. Prohibition to the parliaments from considering themselves as connected one with the other, and forming but one body. 2d. Prohibition from interfering in political affairs. 3d. Prohibition from deferring the execution of edicts, when, after having heard their remonstrances, the king should abide by his first orders.

This was harsh, but rigorously true. To maintain the contrary, and yet assert themselves to be the supporters of the old monarchy, was—no offence to *Messieurs*—a lie. But how can we be astonished that *Messieurs* were not in favor of the old doctrines, when the king himself dared not be so?

XXXVII.

THE KING SEES MORE CLEARLY.—A PLAN.

"Well said, Richelieu!" he exclaimed. "Your late grand-uncle, the cardinal, could not have spoken more properly. But, my poor Richelieu, he lived one hundred and twenty years ago."

"And suppose it were five hundred?"

"You would be a hundred times more mistaken,—though you are quite right all the time."

"What matter is it to them whether you can or cannot do everything, provided that you wish to do what is for their good, and keep up some few formalities?"

"You kept up formalities finely—you, my representative, as you say—with your trees at Bordeaux! You have made me perhaps more enemies down there than the cardinal made for Louis XIII. by decapitating a Montmorency. The abuse of power in little things contributes far more to alienate the people from us than its abuse in great matters. Besides, we are no longer in those days when, provided the king was good, no one troubled himself as to whether it was in his power to do evil. They want guarantees now."

"And by what right do they want them?"

"Understand, my friend, that I am here the advocate neither of my parliament nor my people. They want them—because

they want them. I do not pronounce whether they are right or wrong; I only state facts. I repeat it, they want guarantees. It is not enough for them that I am good—or passable; they begin to wish it out of my power to be otherwise. You know Quesnay, the physician of Madame de Pompadour. It was remarked,—indeed I had myself remarked,—that he avoided my presence. The marquise at last alluded to it one day. 'Madame,' he said, 'I do not like to see a man who could with a word have my head cut off.' 'Nonsense!' she replied; 'the king is so good!' But he went away shaking this head which I permit him to keep, and muttering, 'So good!—so good! What does that prove?'"

"Impertinent fellow," said Richelieu.

"Impertinent if you choose, but impertinent fellows of this kind, begin to be so very numerous, that they will have to be consulted some of these days."

"I hope I shall not see that day."

"Your children will see it. And the noble oaks of your park, Richelieu, may one day pay well for the *bourgeois* elms of the aldermen of Bordeaux."

"Still talking of these elms, sire?"

"You would never guess what made me think of them again, for the story is rather old, and I confess that I had entirely forgotten it. Do you remember the passage in which Father Bridaine gave us the other day such good receipts for getting rid of all incumbrances upon the way of salvation? 'No reflections,' he said. 'Seize the axe, and let the first stroke, if possible, be an irreparable one, that it may deprive you of all thought of regretting the obstacle, and your adversaries all thought of setting it up again.' Good! I said to myself; that is the way. It is not exactly your practice, I fancy, in matters of salvation; but at any rate, this axe, this irreparable blow

struck at the outset, made me think of your freak in Guyenne, more, I confess, than I ought to have thought of it during the sermon."

"Poor preachers! while they are sweating with their endeavors to reason firmly, and carry on the minds of their hearers with them, they do not imagine that as they go on, they can bring up all sorts of odd ideas, which will take root there instead of their own."

"It is, in fact, not the first time," said the king, "that I have caught myself during a sermon, a hundred miles away from preacher, sermon, church, and everything around me. As I retraced my steps, I have amused myself by remarking by what a series of jumps my thoughts had gone over the ground. To hinder those excursions is, I should think, one of the greatest, but likewise one of the rarest and most difficult triumphs of the orator. I love secretly to play certain preachers the trick of not following them, but leaving them to fight all alone; but there are some on the contrary, whom I reproach myself, afterwards, for not having followed more closely. Father Bridaine is among this number. He pleased me decidedly. I should like to hear him again, but how shall I? I cannot have him preach at court. It would be a blow to the marquise, the abbé Narniers, the bishop, and all their friends, and—to myself too somewhat."

"Let us go incognito to Paris, and hear him."

"To Paris?—What are you talking about? I never have been there incognito in my life, except to the Opera balls."

"Well? When— But I beg pardon. I believe I was going to say something foolish."

"It appears then that I have just done so."

"Your Majesty?—"

"Well! Did you not decide that you were too good a

servant ever to do anything else but what you have just seen me do?"

"Your Majesty has a good memory."

"And a sharp scent, eh? 'When the devil grew old he became a hermit.' That was the end of your sentence. Confess."

"It is very certain that if it were known that—"

"That the hermit of the *Parc-aux-cerfs*—"

"Went incognito to Paris, it would be little imagined that he went to hear a sermon."

"We will do what we can about it. I will go."

"We will go. Ah! I believe that madame la marquise is coming."

"Do not go and tell her about this, I beg!"

"No, sire."

XXXVIII.

MADAME DE POMPADOUR'S BUDGET OF ANECDOTES.—A NEW PLAN TO AMUSE THE KING.

The king had been amused for a few moments. He felt the vague pleasure of a sick man who has passed an hour without suffering, or who, on awaking, finds the night further spent than he had ventured to hope.

Madame de Pompadour perceived this slight clearing up at the first glance. Her task of amusing the king was to be a little less difficult than usual this evening. Richelieu received for his trouble, a half glance of gratitude.

She had, for that matter, an ample fund of anecdotes. There were enough for her to relate for an hour at least, and she told a story admirably.

It was about the abbé Coquet, a good old priest, who had been arrested by a sergeant who had heard some talk of seizing the *Abbé Coquet*, a villainous little romance which was sold surreptitiously. Or it was a village curé, who was preaching about sudden deaths, and cried: "Thus it is with us. We go to bed well, and get up stone dead!"

Or it was an old councillor, Monsieur d'Herbaut, who, writing to one of his friends of an estate which he has just bought, adds, that there is a chapel upon it, "in which my wife and I wish to be buried, if God spares our lives."

Or it was Monsieur de Zurlauben, a dull savant, whom it was said Mademoiselle de Lussan had described as "an immense library, the librarian of which is a fool."

Or it was the Chevalier de Florian, who going to see the wood work which was being laid down at the Palais-Royal, had put his finger so far into a pine knot that he remained caught there. His rescue had required an hour's labor, to the great jubilation of the duke of Orleans and his court.

Or it was the duchess of Orleans, who had put a guaze cap upon the head of the old baron d'Estélan, who had gone to sleep in her saloon, and allowed him to go to the theatre in this pretty costume.

Or it was the princess de Carignan, who, in the midst of a numerous company, had felt one of her mole skin eyebrows coming off, and had put it on again—but upside down, which made a moustache of it.

"But apropos of the princess de Carignan," said the marquise; "does your Majesty know what happened to her protegé, poor d'Orbigny?"

"D'Orbigny? I saw him yesterday," said the king.

"For the last time, perhaps."

"Ah!"

"He was almost crushed to death, in the Rue Saint-Denis, by one of those new vehicles. You know—"

"A cabriolet?"

"Yes. For this name begins to take, and it is not inapplicable, I assure you.* Nothing is to be seen in the streets of Paris, but these hopping, jumping machines. The foot passengers do not know what is to become of them."

"And have there been any others hurt?" asked the king.

"A number," said Richelieu, "but only commoners. Now here is a gentleman wounded."

"If I were chief of the police," said the king, "I would prohibit these cabriolets."

Was he jesting? No. Every day something or other led him to make the remark that if he were such an one, he would do such a thing. But the courtiers took care not to notice these strange observations. It would have seemed too much as if they perceived his indolence.

"Monsieur de Sartine," said Richelieu, "has a tolerable amount of business on hand, just now. Thieves are plenty; the *convulsionaries* have again taken to performing miracles; and the actresses are so insolent, that some one of them has to be sent to For-l'Evêque every day."

"Yes," said the king, "and at For-l'Evêque the bolts are scarcely drawn after them, before your finest equipages dash up, gentlemen; and the lieutenant of police has more trouble in refusing your petitions in favor of these fine ladies, than to take charge of all the thieves and convulsionaires in Paris."

"If it were not for us, what would become of the theatre?"

"Oh! go on—go on. Happy are those who have it in their power."

"Sire," said the marquise, "it is a long time, it seems to me,

* *Cabrioler*, verb,—to jump, to cut capers. Tr.

since we have acted anything for you. What would you think of a little representation at Bellevue?"

"In July?"

"Why not? We could have a little theatre arranged in the open air. We would have only a few select guests; only a few of the best musicians. We might play some little piece, *Le Devin de Village** for instance, which you liked so much. I have been amusing myself lately by looking over the part I used to play in it. I still know it pretty well."

"You think so?"

He smiled his most malicious smile. *The part which she used to play!* She carried the matter off very well, however: "Yes, sire," she said, in the most innocent tone. "The music is so simple,—so touching. Even your Majesty remembered some of the airs."

It must be observed that Louis XV. had, as Rousseau said, the most wretched voice in his kingdom. He knew it perfectly well, and to remind him of his singing was a very good way to repay him for his epigram.

He went on smiling, however. But suddenly, with a more serious air, he said:

"When shall this fête take place?"

"On Monday, sire."

"Impossible."

She looked at him with some surprise, and as if awaiting an explanation, or at least an excuse. But she received neither the one nor the other.

"Tuesday, then," she continued, in a half offended, half uncertain tone.

"Tuesday be it."

He did not hope to conceal from her his expedition to Paris,

* The Village Conjuror.

but he wished her at least not to know it beforehand. He asked, moreover, nothing better than to pique her curiosity. It was one of his manias to perplex people.

XXXIX.

RABAUT'S MEMORIAL.—THE PROTESTANT CLERGY IN FRANCE.—THE CATHOLIC CLERGY.—PERSECUTION.

But as he thought again of Bridaine, he remembered another person from whom on the same day, and at the same moment, he had received a paper which he had not seen again. Not that he was in the habit of troubling himself much in regard to the fate of the petitions which he made over to the duke de Richelieu. Accident only, and perhaps also the physiognomy of the unknown petitioner, had helped him to remember Rabaut.

"What became," he asked, "of the second paper which I received on Sunday?"

"It is not lost, sire; but it treated of such grave matters—"

"Good!—You may speak to me of it another time."

"Besides, before speaking to your Majesty about it, I thought I ought to send for the author, and gather—"

"Well, well—"

"Only a word more. Did your Majesty observe the person?"

"Why, yes,—I believe so. Who is it?"

"Ah, sire, you would never guess in a thousand chances. It was Rabaut."

"Rabaut? And pray who is Rabaut?"

"Why, Rabaut, the preacher, the *pope* of the French Huguenots—Rabaut, who has given me more trouble in gov-

erning Languedoc, than all the Huguenots put together—Rabaut, against whom all your soldiers have been sent out for the last twenty years."

"All very possible. But it is the first time I ever heard the name."

"Why, all France knows it."

"All very possible, I tell you. Is this, then, the only thing," he added, mournfully, "of which I am the only one who knows nothing."

He was silent a moment, as if reflecting upon the reproach, of which he himself had been the medium. It was, in fact, one of the gravest of all reproaches. Certainly no one had intentionally concealed from him a name so generally known. It was accordingly, only to his absolute carelessness, that his ignorance of it until this moment was to be ascribed.

"It was that Rabaut?" he resumed. "He is brave, certainly. Is there not a penalty of death against these preachers?"

"Undoubtedly, as your Majesty confirmed those of the late king."

"Yes, I recollect.—I have signed so many things on this subject!* What kind of man is he?"

"A man who must be seen in order that you may have an idea of him; a soul of iron in a body apparently feeble, but in reality also of iron. An unprecedented mingling of humility in all that regards himself, and of pride in all that concerns his faith."

* A pamphlet published in 1736, contains a catalogue of works, purporting to have been published by an editor of Utrecht, and among the number, is a "treatise on silence and timidity, interspersed with notes upon indolence, and the way to sign one's own name without knowing why,—by S. M. T. C." (*Sa Majesté Très Chretienne.*) His most Christian Majesty.

"You have seen him, then?"

"No later than to-day."

"And where did you find him? For I suppose he did not wait to be traced."

"On the contrary, sire; he gave his name and address."

"Extraordinary man! I should like to see him."

"There is nothing to prevent, sire. He is in my apartments."

"In yours? Here? At the château! He is not afraid—"

"Of what, sire? By giving his name, he appealed to your honor—and mine. It is a truce. When he has gone back to his mountains, then let the chase begin again. I believe, however, to tell the truth, that he will never be taken. He is so watched, so guarded by these people, that only the most unheard-of chance could make him fall into our hands. Would it be any great gain if he should? I doubt it. In the first place, in spite of the executions, the number of preachers has not ceased increasing. There are now sixty, it is said, and far too well organized for the death of their chief to scatter them. It would only increase their zeal. Then I would not promise that there would not be a general insurrection throughout the province; and you know what it cost, during the last years of the late king, to re-establish quiet there. When I governed in Languedoc, I did all that was possible to have him taken, without concealing from myself that I would be perhaps very sorry to have him found. I knew that every time an attempt at insurrection had been quieted by his exertions, the hatred had only been repressed until the moment when he should be captured. There is, as it were, a tacit arrangement on this point which is positively terrifying."

"Yes, truly," replied the king. "And if it were allowed him to quit the country, without having his property confiscated, or his family troubled?"

"It has been proposed to him often enough. More has been done. It was attempted to force him to it. I thought of having his wife and children arrested at Nîmes, and to make his quitting the kingdom the condition of their freedom. Accordingly, one night the house was surrounded by a hundred soldiers. They had orders not to carry out the arrest this time. I thought the fright would be sufficient. One door had accordingly been left open, in order that the wife might escape; but it was soon evident that nothing was to be gained from or through her. She insisted upon remaining. She wished to be arrested, she said, in order that the injustice should be more flagrant. She was at length put out of the house, in order to give her the appearance of having escaped. She wandered about, I know not where, for two years, enduring, with her little children, all sorts of hardships and fatigue, rather than persuade her husband to leave France; advice, for that matter, to which he would certainly not have listened."

"What became of her?" said the king; for, in spite of himself, he felt interested in this unheard-of heroism of one of his victims.

"She returned at length to Nîmes, where she was left in quiet."

"What a life," said the marquise, "is that of these women! They are almost all married,—are they not?"

"Almost all. They even marry generally very young. They find a source of perseverance and courage, it is said, in these unions so surrounded with danger."

"Which does not agree," said the king, "with what our church declares, that a priest, unless he is single, cannot be a devout man."

"Bah!" said Richelieu. "Do we fight any the worse, pray, because we have wives and children? Our priests remain

single because it suits them to do so, in order to have no other interest in the world than that of their caste. And truly those are very devout men, those cassocked bachelors, whom we see crowding around the toilettes of our ladies! People do me the honor, sire, to set me down for a great many affairs of gallantry. I do not know whether they do not even exaggerate a little; but this much I can say, that I have never taken the field in these regions without finding at least one abbé in my way."

"You are very severe, Seigneur Lovelace."

"Perhaps so; but against whom? With all my heart I pardon these poor abbés, who have nothing to do but to consume the fruits of their benefices, even if they do run after the forbidden fruit; but what makes me angry is, to hear the clergy, in spite of this, pretend to the monopoly of virtues and morals. I do not ask that they shall be saints; but let them at least not pretend to remain single in order to be so. If they wish to resemble the rest of mankind, let them do so; but do not let them begin by saying that they belong to a separate class. I have seen the English clergy; I have seen the clergy of the Protestant States of Germany. They will tell you there, in their somewhat abrupt biblical style, 'It is not good for man to be alone.'* But among so many thousands of ecclesiastics, years pass by without a single scandal being heard of; and when the people wish to see the model of a pure and united family, they have only to go to their pastors."

"Well preached!" said the king. "I should like to assemble the gallant abbés in my dominions, and have them *make a retreat*† under your orders."

* Genesis, ii. c., 18 v.

† A phrase applied to certain periodical retirements from the world practiced among Roman Catholics. Tr.

"At your service, sire. I am a little uneasy about one thing."

"What?"

"I fear that there can be no cathedral found large enough to lodge them."

The king laughed immoderately, the marquise less heartily. As may be imagined, such a subject was not calculated to put her at her ease. In other days, the king would have taken care not to continue it; but since he was now only bound to her by the relaxed ties of old habit, he did not trouble himself so much.

"Do not abuse the abbés of my kingdom too much," he said. "In the first place, the lower orders of priests are better; and then go and see how things are in Spain, Italy, America, everywhere that the clergy are all-powerful. In the Spanish colonies, the excess of the evil has finally brought a sort of remedy with it,—that is to say, many of the priests have a woman residing with them whom they treat almost like a wife, appearing with her in public; bringing up her children; married, in short, with the exception of the ceremony. For that matter, this was generally the case, but with still more scandal, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. When Calvin and Luther attacked us on these points, they had only to repeat what had for a long time been said even in the church, in books, pamphlets and sermons, everywhere. It must be confessed that they had excuse enough for declaiming against the celibacy of the clergy."

"Ah ha, sire!" exclaimed Richelieu, "this conversation smells terribly of the faggot! If this Rabaut heard us, I think he might be tempted to ask us why we persecute him and his companions, if we know so well, upon occasion, how to differ in opinion from the church. It is a question which I have

sometimes asked myself, for that matter, particularly when I commanded in Languedoc. Here, I said to myself, are these poor people, who in every other respect are examples to the province. Sober, industrious, saving, they have, in spite of our tormenting, kept themselves very far superior to the surrounding population. The ordinary police has nothing to do, so far as they are concerned. It is a miracle when one of them has to be punished for anything besides his religion. 'Their whole crime,' as Monsieur de Voltaire says, 'is that of praying to God in bad French, instead of doing it in still worse Latin.' And I, who would have scarcely anything to do in the province, if it were entirely peopled with such quiet, submissive inhabitants,—I must persecute them, and harass myself in inventing, every day, some new injury to do them, some new vexation with which to afflict them! What induces me to do it? Do I hate them? No. Do I hate their doctrines? I have been told often enough that I must hate them; but I have never examined into them, and, to judge from their effects, they do not seem to me very abominable. Once more, I ask myself what business I have to persecute these people?"

"You have to execute my edicts," said the king.

"O! sire, that is not the question. Your edicts were never better executed than in my time. The *governor* faithfully performed his duty; the *man* asked himself, privately, if it would not have been more agreeable had his duty been of another nature?"

"That is very nice reasoning, Richelieu," said the king, a little out of humor. "With such reasoning as this, you would soon come neither to obey or to make others obey any longer."

But the ill-humor of the monarch was founded upon quite another cause than the fear of not being obeyed. He too had vaguely asked himself why he persecuted the Protestants; and

while the marshal could at least take refuge behind the edicts of which he had been but the executor, the king beheld himself alone, beneath the weight of a gigantic responsibility. In vain he repeated to himself that he had found the system already established; that he had only carried out the errors of his predecessor. Forty years of persecution, without his ever having asked himself why! This was, of all the weaknesses of his reign, the most odious and the most guilty. The revocation of the edict of Nantes had, since the death of Louis XIV., lost all the grandeur with which that prince knew how to clothe the most monstrous ideas, the most iniquitous measures. Louis XIV. had believed in the possibility of establishing religious unity in France; he had seriously, strongly, obstinately willed it. What had Louis XV. wished? He had never known. He had allowed himself, from childhood to manhood, to follow in the bloody track marked out by his ancestor. Moreover, when Louis XIV. began to persecute the Protestants, he had begun to become a good Catholic; he had given up his irregularities; he had married Madame de Maintenon, and gave to religion, or what he considered religion, a large place in his life. But Louis XV., in the midst of indifference and immorality, had augmented the cruelties of the great king. His hand was weary of signing, even without having read them, edicts which a blind obedience was to transcribe, in letters of blood and fire, on the remotest parts of the kingdom.

XL.

THE KING WILL SEE RABAUT.—HE WAVERS AS TO HOW HE WILL RECEIVE HIM.

Such were the sad reflections which he had been led to make. If he had been the man to make a good resolution on the

spot,—(that for instance, of inquiring seriously into the state of things,) the cause of the Protestants would have been gained. He would of his own accord, accompanied by their blessings, have entered upon the path of toleration into which he allowed himself to be dragged, ten years afterwards, but slowly, and with a bad grace,—far more from weakness and indolence, than from humanity or reason, and without carrying with him to the tomb the gratitude of any being.

After a tolerably long silence, he said: "Richelieu, I wish to see this man. Go and bring him."

"What! sire," exclaimed the marquise, "in earnest?"

"Yes."

"Does your Majesty think of granting their demands?"

"I know nothing about that. And you?"

"Ah! sire, it would be one of the most glorious days of your reign."

He looked at her with surprise. Nothing, until now, had ever made him dream of such language from her.

Not because she had never thought of the wretchedness of the French Protestants. But if she thought of them, she thought also, and still more, of herself. She would have been wary of bringing up the subject so long as she saw that the day had not come when she might gain honor and profit from it. Secretly imbued with the liberal doctrines of the age, nothing would have delighted her more than to connect her name with some of the reforms to which the philosophers promised their incense, and she would have been doubly flattered to receive with the praises of the infidels, the blessings of men persecuted for their faith. Add to this the desire of being avenged on the clergy, by whom she looked upon herself as persecuted, and to whom she knew that nothing could be more displeasing than a relaxation of these severities.

She repented however, of having too plainly allowed her intention of acting in this direction to be perceived. The king continued to look at her fixedly, without saying a word. He evidently distrusted her, and himself still more. Because he had allowed edicts of persecution to be dictated to him, he wished not to be dictated to in regard to one of toleration. When a weak man takes it into his head to be firm, it is rarely that he does not happen to choose the wrong time for being so.

"Richelieu," he resumed, "go and bring this man here. I wish him to hear from my lips—"

The king's tone was completely changed. Richelieu, who was just quitting the apartment, could not help turning his head at these last words.

"Yes, from my mouth," he continued, "that there is neither peace nor pardon to be expected for him and his fellows. Ah! you fancy that I shall always be led? You fancy that I shall be made to give a specimen of a king undoing what he has done, contradicting what he has said, and giving back with one hand what he has taken away with the other. No, by heaven, no! No more heretics in France! One king, one people, one religion! Go, Richelieu. Well, madame, I did not request you to retire."

"I am in the way,—sire."

"Remain here. You have often enough seen me weak and slavish. Are you afraid to see me king?"

She reseated herself and was silent. Louis XV., as we have already remarked, was not without dignity, but he must not have time to prepare for being dignified, for then he was no longer so. Beneath the air, already rather more scowling than majestic, with which he strode up and down the apartment while he awaited the minister, madame de Pompadour had no difficulty in perceiving the approach of an embarrassment into

which she had always seen him thrown by occasions of this kind, and which was moreover betrayed by a very curious sign,—a violent trembling of the chin. He evidently repented of having sent for Rabaut. He did not feel himself strong enough to look in the face of a man whom his edicts condemned to the scaffold; he felt that a courageous victim always has a superiority over his tyrant.

XLI.

RECEPTION OF RABAUT.—HE TAKES HIS DEPARTURE.

And it was not without strong emotion that Rabaut, preceded by the marshal, bent his steps towards the apartment of the king. What is wanted with him by this master whose words have hitherto reached him and his brethren, only as a storm of persecution and death?

Richelieu had declined giving him any particulars. The king had appeared so agitated, so little decided, although he strove to give himself the appearance of being so, that he equally feared terrifying Rabaut by groundless apprehensions, or deluding him with false hopes.

The king was seated. The marquise, at some distance, was reading, or pretending to do so.

The steps of the duke were already heard in the anti-chamber.

"Ah! Good heavens," said the king, "he will speak to me of his petition—and I have not read it."

"I will come to your aid," said the marquise.

"But you have not read it either."

"Do not be uneasy."

And thus faded away this attempt at majesty. The actor

again called for his prompter; the royal puppet himself aided to refasten the strings by which he was to be made to move.

They entered.

"Sire," said Richelieu, "here is the person who had the honor to present your Majesty with a petition last Sunday."

Rabaut bowed,—first to the king, then to the marquise.

She blushed at this second salutation. Richelieu, with his hand clenched, cast at him sideways one of those looks which seem to say; "are you mad?"

The poor minister, in truth, had imagined himself saluting the queen. He knew, as every one did, what were the morals of the king, but in his simplicity as a provincial and a good man, he could never have gone so far as to imagine him seated beside his mistress, in *his* presence. He had by this time regained all his quiet dignity, and waited respectfully to be questioned by the king.

"It has doubtless been made known to you," said the king at length, "why you are summoned here."

"No, sire."

"Your Majesty did not desire me to do so," said Richelieu.

"Has your Majesty condescended," resumed Rabaut, "to glance over the petition which I had the honor to present?"

"Monsieur," said the marquise, hurriedly, "you are doubtless not aware that the king is never questioned."

"I was not aware of it, Madame;—but my question, sire, was no question. In granting me this audience,—for which I had not dared to hope—your Majesty informs me that my petition has been read."

"Monsieur," said the king, "I have no explanation to give; neither do I grant you an audience. I learned by accident that you were in my palace. I wished that upon your return among your Huguenots,—for my clemency will permit your re-

turn,—you should put an end to the unfounded rumors of toleration which are circulated in order to keep up their courage. Expect nothing. Hope for nothing. New edicts if necessary, shall be added to those which you teach them to violate. Let them give up a resistance which will in future be useless, aimless and without end. Out of the Church there is no peace, no salvation for them,—neither in this world, nor in another."

Rabaut had raised his head upon hearing the first words. Astonishment, and then indignation and disdain, scarcely restrained by a careless respect, were depicted upon his countenance. The king, in spite of the increasing sharpness of his words, had ceased looking him in the face. His tone, grave and dignified at first, had become that of a man who makes a great effort to speak loudly, and who is the first to be afraid of the noise he makes.

He paused. Rabaut remained motionless. A moment, which seemed an age to the king, passed in the most profound silence.

"You have heard the king's orders, Monsieur," said the marquise at length.

"Yes, Madame, and I still doubt whether I have heard aright. Your Majesty—"

"Madame is not the queen," said Louis XV. precipitately, for it was to the marquise that Rabaut had said *your Majesty*.

It only needed this incident to complete the discomposure of the king. Also disconcerted, but only by the shame of him who had given cause for such a mistake, Rabaut turned towards him with his eyes cast down, and without adding a single word.

Then, as the king did not dismiss him, Richelieu said:

"Speak; his Majesty has perhaps still a moment to give you."

"Sire," he said slowly, "only a word: 'We ought to obey God, rather than men.'"*

He bowed once more, but to the king only, and quitted the apartment.

XLII.

RABAUT'S MEMORIAL.

"Ha! ha!" cried the marshal, "laughing as loudly as he could;" that is their way! Say what you will to them, and they will throw a verse of the Bible in your teeth,—that was one, I fancy,—and turn on their heel. Extraordinary beings, on my word! For just as your Majesty has seen him,—will he be, if he be taken, at the foot of the gallows. There was one of them, however, who grew weak in the presence of death. It was one Molines, of Nimes, sometimes called *Fléchier*, because, it seems, he wrote sermons in the style of the late academician. The eve of his punishment, this fine speechifier trembled. He offered to become Catholic. His offer was accepted, and great rejoicings were made. And now my rascal is in Holland, more Protestant than ever!"

"And is he the only one who has faltered?" asked the king.

"There was also a certain Duperron, of Grenoble, in '45. But he died shortly afterwards, a prey to the most frightful remorse.* It is an unexampled obstinacy."

* Acts v. 29.

* Molines was still alive in 1778, but a prey to all the agonies of remorse which had killed Duperron. A man who knew him has left us some details of this long agony. "When very young, I remember to have seen him many and many a time come to my father, a pastor in Amsterdam, accusing himself bitterly; while my father always strove to make him understand that through the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, he might hope for salvation, like any other repentant sinner. He never

"Oh yes, Richelieu, I know examples of it."

"What are they, sire?"

"Those martyrs of the early ages who are now upon our altars were also famously obstinate."

The king might have added, that the persecutions of the early Christians, although far more cruel, undoubtedly, than Voltaire asserts, were, nevertheless, neither so long continued, nor so tenacious, nor so odiously refined, as those organized by Catholicism.

"Yes," he continued, "famously obstinate,—these men who preferred to suffer a thousand deaths rather than consent—to what? To a very small thing, a mere nothing—to throw a few grains of incense in the fire, before the image of a god or an emperor. And we admire them, Richelieu.—And we are right.—And because we believe those of the present time to be in error, are they very different, in the sight of God, from those martyrs of old? Are we in fact much wiser than the pagans, because in place of attacking a new God, we have for the last two hundred years been bent upon persecuting a new method of adoring the same God?"

"Sire," said the duke, "permit me to decline following you in the changes of opinion to which it appears your Majesty is about to submit. I confess, that if it were permitted me to entertain the sentiments which your Majesty has just expressed, and if I were king, the Protestants of my States would

came and seated himself silently among us, waiting that my father, for the hundredth time, should repeat to him the words of consolation,—without my feeling a kind of terror. I walked around him in a circle as large as the size of the room would permit, but without for an instant losing sight of him. He was so absorbed by his own feelings, that he took no notice of anything whatever. Thirty years of repentance seemed to him but a day and insufficient to weep over his crime."

M. Chatelain. *Religious paper of the canton de Vaud.* 1840.

soon be at the end of their troubles. One would think, besides, that your Majesty was quoting a page of the petition in question, for everything you said is there almost in the same terms."

"You must show me this petition."

"I have it with me, sire. Here it is."

"Well, read it to us, marquise."

She obeyed.

"'Sire,—One of the consolations which we have in our sufferings, is the thought that your Majesty is ignorant of them, that your Majesty is deceived in regard to us, and that we might have a king who would love if he but knew us.

"'But, sire, what way have we of making ourselves known to your Majesty? Among the numerous petitions or memorials which we have had laid at the foot of your throne by different hands, we have not heard that a single one has been placed before your Majesty."

"It is true," murmured the king.

"I beg pardon, sire," said Richelieu. "I have never come from Languedoc without my hands full of them; and as I had promised to deliver them to your Majesty, I did so."

The king did not reply. He had never read them; he had not even looked to see what they were about.

Madame de Pompadour continued:

"'——Will this meet with a different fate? It will be presented to you by one of the men who has the most audaciously braved your laws. If he dares to present himself before you, it is because he is conscious of having had all the respect for royal authority which it can claim without infringing upon the authority of God.

"'It is long since there has been or can be any idea among us of claiming either privileges, guarantees, subsidies, or any-

thing which it was concluded to grant us in times of disturbance or war. We ask but to live in peace, mingling with the rest of your subjects, and supporting, as we now do, all the charges of the State, without asking in return anything but the liberty to serve God as our consciences dictate.

"'These are the terms in which we wish that the question should be presented to the mind, and particularly to the heart, of your Majesty. Everything, for a century past, proves to us that we have scarcely any real and irreconcilable enemies save in the ranks of the clergy. Among all others, the most pious men advocate toleration, some openly, others in the depths of their hearts. We are persecuted,—and we venture to hope that your Majesty is not an exception,—far less from hatred—'"

"Just what you were saying, Richelieu," interrupted the king.

"Yes, sire; but I thought so long before I read that."

"I did not; but they are right. Go on."

"'—— far less from hatred than from an old impulse of hatred—from a suspicion which has long been unfounded—from principles which become every day more relaxed in regard to other matters, and which are only kept up in full force against us in order that it may appear that they are not altogether abandoned. We can understand that your Majesty, being attached to the doctrines of the Roman Church, would prefer to have children of that church alone for your subjects; but we implore you to consider whether the severity of the means employed in your name is not disproportionate to the small degree of antipathy with which we really inspire you.

"'Moreover, we do not come at this time to defend ourselves before you. We shall not remind you of the part which we bore in the events which elevated the house of Bourbon to the throne, nor the unshaken fidelity which we have always

manifested towards it, nor the distinguished men we have had the honor of giving to France. We shall commence no discussion of the motives which induce us to hold fast the religion of our fathers, nor of the right which is assumed to be in possession of those who would force us to abandon it. We wish only to lay before you a statement, brief as possible, of the system of laws which oppresses us. We are convinced that your Majesty has never looked upon it as a whole, and that you would have turned away with horror from a system so cruelly monstrous.

"'In the first place, if we examine its foundations we see that for forty-five years they have reposed upon a fact which is manifestly no fact. Louis XIV., a few months before his death, thought himself authorized to affirm that there were no longer any Protestants in France. "*Their presence in our States*," he says in a last manifesto against them, "*is a sufficient proof that they have embraced the Catholic religion, without which, they would not have been allowed to remain.*" These words, sire, were signed, as is long since universally admitted, without having been read by your ancestor.

"'Whatever might be his antipathy against us, however deceived he might have been as to the results of his efforts, he had too much sense to believe we were all converted,* and above all, to consider as a proof of this, the single fact that we remained in France; when we were forbidden to attempt quitting France, under penalty of the galleys.

* In 1698, thirteen years after the conversion, in a body, of the Protestants, with which Louis XIV. had been deluded, Monsieur be Bâville, the intendant, writes: "There are districts of more than twenty parishes, in which the curé is the most unhappy and useless of the inhabitants, and where, in spite of all the pains which have been taken, not a single conversion could be made, nor a single Catholic from without established." Quoted by Monsieur Breteuil, in 1786, in his memorial to Louis XVI.

"'However this may be, this has been, ever since that time, the starting point of all the measures taken against us. In order better to harden themselves to the work of mangling us, our tormentors had pronounced us dead.

"'We were accordingly no longer called Protestants, or Huguenots, or heretics, but *new converts*. From that period, as we were supposed to be Catholics, all decrees in regard to Protestantism placed us under terrible penalties, already decreed against whosoever, after having abjured, should again become a Protestant. Until that time, so long as there had been no formal abjuration, we were at least permitted to die in peace. Since the edict of 1715, as we were all asserted to have abjured, no one of us on his death-bed can refuse the sacraments without being looked upon as a *relapsed heretic*. If he should be restored to health he must go to the galleys; if he die, the action is carried on against his memory. His goods are confiscated and his body dragged upon a hurdle. Woe be to him also, who may have counselled the dying man to follow the dictates of his conscience! If it be a man, he is condemned to the galleys; if a woman, to solitary confinement for life. In your armies every one is at liberty to be an infidel; but if a soldier should die, as it happened at Uzés, declaring himself to be a Protestant, it is immediately decreed "that there will be an action against his memory." And this is not, as might be supposed, the decision of some obscure provincial tribunal, or of some fiery intendant. It is a decree of your council of State.

"'False in its statements, cruel in its consequences, the allegation of the last edict of Louis XIV. did not even agree with its predecessors. The parliament of Paris remarked this, and the registering of the edict was delayed a month. "The king,"

said the attorney-general,* "never exactly commanded the Huguenots to become Catholics; it cannot therefore be said that this change is to be taken for granted. All the rigor of the law falls upon the *relapsed converts*, namely upon those who after having abjured, have fallen back into their errors; but it is first necessary to prove that they have ever quitted these errors, for in order to *fall back* one must have first arisen. It will always be difficult to conceive how a man who does not appear ever to have been converted, could have *fallen back* into heresy, and how he could have been condemned as if the fact were proved."

"'Thus were trodden under foot, in this too famous edict, together with the feelings of human nature, the first rules of written law, and even those of common sense.

"'These representations, however, either never reached the monarch, or were unable to modify the all powerful-influence which had induced him to sign the edict. The plan of Father Letellier was to remain in full force. The edict was registered. Those who had pointed out its errors, were the first to put it into execution.

"'Such, sire, was the heritage left you by your ancestor.

"'In your edict of 1724, which your extreme youth at that time, happily allows us to consider as not your work,† you de-

* D'Aguesseau.

† It was that of Lavergne de Tressan, archbishop of Rouen, aided, (for the fact is only too well ascertained,) by the same d'Aguesseau then become chancellor. So hard does the Roman Church make the hearts of her champions, even of the wisest and most virtuous! It may be seen in particular, in his *Discourse* upon the life of his Father, with what complacency he expatiates upon the severities of which the latter when intendant of Languedoc, had been the instrument. He censures the *dragonades;* but with this exception, looks upon all as legitimate, great and fine.

clared it to be your wish that all the laws already promulgated against us, should be maintained in full force. You added to them at the same time numerous particulars tending to co-ordinate them. It was you, sire, who definitely established the cruel code which harasses us in our belief, in our temporal interests, in our family affections, in the minutest details of all which, in this world, is precious or sacred to us.

"'In our belief, we say:

"'You have been doubtless led to believe, as was the late king, that it was not exactly intended to do violence to our consciences; that it was only purposed to bring us by these hardships to reflect upon our obstinacy, and to re-enter, but of our own good will, into the bosom of the Church.

"'And in fact, since the persecutions prior to the Edict of Nantes, there has been no punishment individually levelled against the heretic as a heretic Accordingly, when we are punished, it is not as Protestants professing an erroneous belief, but as disobeying your ordinances.

"'It is accordingly, not the inquisition; but in reality what is wanting to make it the same? Is it not exactly equivalent to it, if we are punished, not as heretics, but as violators of laws made against us because we are so? We are not commanded to believe; we are only commanded to profess belief. But sire, in all matters in which conscience is concerned, it is doing violence to conscience itself to force a mere external profession. Unless you tell a dying man that he is at liberty to lie to God and men, you cannot order him to appear to be a Catholic without ordering him from that very fact to be one. Is this an order which your Majesty feels it in your power to give? Or, if we may be allowed to reverse the question, do you feel that it would be possible for you, o your death-bed, to obey any one who required you to profess another faith not your own?

And if you knew, moreover, that you could not disobey without condemning yourself to the galleys, and your children to beggary, would not this pretended respect for your faith seem to you a cruel irony?

"'We are accordingly reduced to appeal, as to a protecting law, to the very edict in which your ancestor revoked that of Henry IV. The last clause, in fact, prohibits our being molested. Provided that we no longer had pastors, nor churches, nor public worship, we were permitted to remain what we were, enjoying our own property, and following the course of our own business, "*without being hindered or troubled on account of religion.*"

"'Thus spoke Louis XIV. in October, 1685; and less than a month after, on the fifth of November, we were already under another law. "His Majesty," wrote Monsieur Louvois to the commandants of the province, "desires that those who will not embrace his religion, shall be subjected to the extreme rigors of the law; and those who may wish to have the foolish glory of being the last to embrace it, ought to be driven to the last extremity."

"'Shall we relate how these conversions in a body were obtained, upon which was soon to be founded the law which commands us all to be looked upon as converts or relapsed?

"'So many Catholics have censured the dragonades, that we need not draw attention to the strangeness or odiousness of such a proceeding.

"'Are they at least discontinued? It is generally believed that they are, and yet, sire, this is not the case. Every year, or nearly every year, they have been tried in some portion of our unhappy provinces. Quite recently, in 1758, they were renewed in all the southern ones with terrible vigor. It is only by means of the compulsory quartering of dragoons and

horsemen of the patrol that the consent of so many of our people has lately been forced from them, to have their children baptized in your Church.

"'But it is most especially our assemblies which have been the objects of the most constant, the severest persecution.

"'Here, we feel that we are not so clearly upon the inviolable grounds of conscience and belief. God is everywhere; everywhere He may be adored and served. Your Majesty has a right to desire that numerous assemblies should not take place in your States without your authorization.

"'Ah! sire, our answer is in what we have suffered, and still suffer every day in disobeying you upon this point. The necessity of sympathizing and feeling in common,—a necessity which is so universal and so pressing even in common life—is so strengthened by persecution, that neither threats, nor tortures, nor anything in the world can repress it. We had more than five hundred places of worship before our days of suffering. These have all been destroyed. We pass by the venerated spots where our fathers worshipped, without even daring to cast a glance of regret towards them; we go to seek at a distance, beneath the vault of heaven, that which we found in our happier days within the humble walls of our churches. This is our crime, sire; this is what has sent so many of our brethren to the galleys, so many of our pastors to death; this is what is to be for an indefinite length of time the cause of the same severities, for we feel that it is not in our power to cease incurring them. As the storm howls more loudly, we feel more deeply the need of clinging closely to one another; wherever it shall not be found utterly impossible for us to meet together, there shall we meet. This is not a bravado, sire; God forbid! None of your subjects desire more earnestly than we do, not to be obliged to disobey you.

We only unveil our hearts to you now; we supplicate you to consider how deeply rooted are those principles which you endeavor to tear from them. Ah! if the feelings of love which we bear for our king and for our France were not also deeply rooted, think you it would be possible for us still to see in you a father, and in this land our country?

"'Laws such as these are not alone cruel; they have besides the disadvantage of only being applied as it were, at a venture. If some of our number are punished for having been present at one of our reunions, a thousand, two thousand, ten thousand who have shared their crime, do not share their punishment. Is it proper, is it wise,—even setting aside all considerations of justice,—that there should be in a State, laws which strike blindly, never reaching more than two guilty individuals in a hundred? What license is given to the arbitrary will of the men charged with their execution! Justice itself in such a shape would become injustice.

"'Has the attempt at least been made practically to amend the defects inherent to such a state of things?

"'On the contrary.—According as the laws became more severe, you suppressed the protecting delays of ordinary justice. When Monsieur de Bâville, in 1698, was seen in one morning, to condemn as many as seventy-five Protestants to the galleys, it might have been imagined that we had endured the utmost degree of oppression. This was a mistake, sire; we are now still lower. At this time the law reached those only who had been arrested in the act of attending an assembly; but since 1745 the same penalty has been extended to all those, says the law, *who are known to have been present* at these meetings. Further still: According to the old law, the intendant could judge only in the presence of seven doctors of the law. You have deprived us of this last guarantee. Since

this same edict of 1745, the intendant presides alone, and gives the final judgment himself, without appeal. We must go back to the periods of the most bitter persecutions by the pagans, in order to find examples of such absolute power committed to the hands of a simple governor.

"'Masters of our life and liberty, the intendants are also masters of our property.

"'Their arbitrary power is in this matter exercised without restraint. In the bosom of France, in the eighteenth century, there are still people *liable to taxation and statute labor, at pleasure.* These unhappy wretches, for whom the rights of property are in fact annihilated,—are ourselves.

"'And there are none of us who are not constantly suffering under one or another of the pecuniary penalties specified in your edicts. It would require too much time to mention these in detail. Besides, all former stipulations are now combined in one, which, if it were executed literally, would be equivalent to the entire confiscation of all that we possess in the kingdom. The intendant has had conferred upon him the right of arbitrary taxation, without appeal, of *all* the Protestants of a district in which an assembly has been held, including even those who can prove that they were not present. In case of the capture of a minister, a fine is fixed, each head of a family is taxed at three thousand livres, which is more than the whole possession of a great number of us, who inhabit our barren mountains.

"'The intendants generally recoil from the odious task of thus at a single blow redeeming the inhabitants of a village, a district, an entire province to beggary; but they cannot always avoid it. Accordingly, every year some of our districts are burdened with enormous fines; every day, any one of them is liable to have the same burden laid upon it. Many a one is

well off in the morning, who in the evening may perchance no longer possess food or shelter.

"'This money, scarcely out of our hands, serves to pay for new means of oppression. It goes to the convents to answer for the support of our wives, our daughters, who are dead to us; it goes to the prisons to reward our gaolers; to the garrisons to stimulate the zeal of the soldiers; it is offered, in short, to who ever shall give notice of an assembly, facilitate the capture of a minister, or inform either publicly or secretly, in regard to some infraction of the edicts. Informers and traitors are openly encouraged, openly paid. The first and simplest notions of honor, honesty and even pity are asserted to be criminal. There is not only money for those who will turn informers; but there are also punishments for such as refuse to do so. If a fugitive minister comes and knocks at our door, we must hasten to give him up to the executioner or we ourselves must go to the galleys. Ah! it is a great consolation, sire, to be able to feel upon listening to the sentence, that these men who condemn us according to an edict, for having done thus, would have condemned us in their hearts if we had done otherwise. But what kind of a law is it which forces judges to punish that which in all other things they would look upon as honorable and natural? In the sight of the immutable laws of reason and humanity, what difference is to be perceived between one of the early Christians hiding a fellow-believer from the rage of the proconsuls, and a Protestant of our day concealing his pastor from the search of an intendant?

"'There are unhappily many other points, sire, in which your edicts agree no better with these eternal laws, of which you would be the first, in all other matters, to condemn the violation.

"'What shall we say of the blows aimed at paternal authori-

ty and all family ties as well as affections. Our children do not belong to us. Not only must we send them, under penalty of enormous fines, to Catholic schools,* but we are forbidden to make any resistance to the efforts made for their conversion. After the age of seven they are allowed to abjure, and to this also we are forbidden to offer any opposition. The abjuration, even when unfairly obtained, is irrevocable. Frequently this is not waited for. As soon as it is *asserted* that an inclination has been perceived in any child to become Catholic, it is lawful to take him from his parents, in order, as it is said, to prevent these precious germs from being destroyed. In this way, sire, none of our children are safe, no father is sure of embracing those in the evening, upon whom in the morning he has bestowed his benediction. And there is nothing fixed, nothing regulated in the exercise of this frightful power. Bishops, governors, intendants, delegates or under delegates, simple curés, private individuals,—it requires the merest pretext in order to invest any or every one of these with it. The magistrates never refuse to sanction anything which has been inspired by so noble a zeal!' "

XLIII.

SOFTENING EFFECTS.

"It is infamous!" cried the king.

Madame de Pompadour had followed in his face the effects

* In the midst of all the zealous interest for the poor peasants lost among their mountains, it should be known what was taking place in Paris. "The holy archbishop De Beaumont *suddenly discovered* not only that the fish women (*femmes de la Halle*), never sent their children to be catechised, but that they themselves had not the least notion of religion or morals, because their mothers and grandmothers had never been instructed in these." MADAME DE GENLIS. *Dictionnaire des Mœurs.*

of what she read. In order to remain neutral, she had begun by reading as calmly as possible. Gradually, whether she had allowed herself to be carried away, or whether, as was more probable, she had seen that there was no risk in appearing moved, she had lent to the bitter sufferings of the oppressed Huguenots, all the charm and all the art with which she knew so well how to improve the paltry products of the muse of that day. The marshal, on his part, no longer sought to conceal his sympathy. A simple description of sufferings endured, would have made less impression on him; but this tissue of iniquities revolted his ideas as a gentleman, his chivalry as an old soldier. He would have better understood the extermination of the Protestants, than these infernal machinations of a tyranny at once mean and atrocious.

She went on.

"'—— Behold, sire, the deplorable state to which you have reduced so large a number of your most faithful subjects. You have set aside, in your laws against them, all those principles, which elsewhere you hold yourself bound to proclaim; you have torn from your heart those feelings which you would blush to forget towards your greatest enemies. Yes, we repeat it, and your Majesty will not contradict us; you would blush to labor at the enfeebling of a nation with which you were at enmity, by encouraging treason in the midst of it, by breaking family ties, in torturing, by means of all that they hold most dear, those of it who refused to concur in your plans. In the midst of real wars, if a man had proposed to you to publish against England or Prussia some manifesto analogous to your edicts against us,—you would have ejected him from your council as an enemy of your glory, and you would have felt yourself obliged to protest, in the hearing of all Europe, against

the insult of which this man would have been guilty in supposing you capable of listening to his proposal.

"'So cruel and unrighteous a set of laws can accordingly have been conceived only by men who are accustomed to look upon all as good which leads to the desired end. We know not, sire, we wish not to know, to whom we owe your severities We only ask, in conclusion, one thing. Let your Majesty take at random, from one of your edicts, or from one of those of the late king, any one of the stipulations to which we have called his attention. Let your Majesty present it, in the form of a general question, to these same men who approved of it in its application to us; and if there is a single one who says; This is good; this is wise and just,—we will then no longer complain, we will bow our heads forever beneath any yoke which it may be thought proper to impose upon us.

"'But no, sire; leave all these hard-hearted counsellors to their pitiless prejudices. In this matter consult only yourself, your reason, your heart. Consider whether it is not time that our sufferings should end, that our chains should fall, that we should recover our rights, if not as citizens, at least as men; consider whether it is really your conscience which leads you to offer us as a holocaust to the ill-will of a power whose ambition you fear. Your ancestor was never more terrible towards us, than when he was on the worst terms with the court of Rome; all that he refused the pope in homage and submission, he repaid in Huguenot blood. Is not this, in more than one respect, the secret of our misfortunes? And if there are some who hate us because they are very Catholic, are there not very many also who constitute themselves our persecutors because they are so little Catholic? Their zeal may serve as an excuse to the first; but what a fearful account will the latter be obliged to render to their God!'"

XLIV.

AN EDICT.

"Is that all?" asked the king.

"It is all, sire."

"Well, marquise, write:

"To Monsieur the duke de Choiseul.

"I am of opinion, cousin, that there is somewhat, and indeed very much to be modified in the manner in which the members of the religion called reformed, are treated in my kingdom. A memorial has been handed me, which shows me that we have gone too far, and that my real intentions have been exaggerated, in the edicts which I have been caused to put forth. I see further, that with all the measures which I have been induced to take, and all those which might still be taken, two or three centuries of severities would perhaps not be sufficient to attain the end which I had proposed to myself.

"My intention is, accordingly, that these should be given up. Draw me up the plan of an edict, in which—"

The king stopped.

"An edict!—That is very difficult. What will the clergy say? What will the pope say? An edict!—No.—We will send secretly to the intendants, the order to drop the present ones. But—suddenly?—What will be said?"

Such was Louis XV. He recoiled before the first difficulties.

"What will be said?" he resumed. "They might cry upon this occasion, *Dédit* of the king.* No.—No edict—no orders. I will leave it for my successor."

* This was a witticism of Monsieur de Cury, a wit by profession, and

"In that case," said Richelieu, "the Protestants must have patience. So much the more so because Monseigneur the dauphin is not very friendly to them."

"Suppose your Majesty should speak to the duke de Choiseul?" said the marquise, laughing. "He has drawn up more edicts than your Majesty. Perhaps he could arrange it to everybody's satisfaction."

"The bigots included?"

"No—but all reasonable people."

"That is to say scarcely any one."

"At least try."

"Let us try, then. Send for the duke."

"This evening?"

"This evening. I wish to put an end to the thing. To think that I can by a word, restore peace and happiness to thousands of men, can deserve their blessings!—"

"Yes.—It is a noble thing to be a king, sire."

"You think so?" said Louis XV. bitterly. "A fine thing, indeed, on my honor, to discover at the end of forty-five years, that one has been the tyrant and butcher of a great part of his subjects! Shall we sup, marquise?"

"And the duke de Choiseul, sire? I have just ordered that he should be sent for."

"So much the worse. What was I thinking of? Do you know that I have already spent two hours with him and the comptroller general?"

well known to the king. At the time of the disputes with the Parliament, when they were selling in the streets an edict in which the king had begun to retract, he said to one of the criers that it was not an *Edit*, (edict,) but a *Dédit*, and the man, who did not know how to read, went about crying *Dédit*, until he was stopped by the police.

(*Edit*, in French, signifies something *said*, *dédit*, signifies something *unsaid*. Tr.)

She knew it, for Choiseul never omitted seeing her before and after his interview with the king. But the king must not know that they so constantly played into each other's hands. They had the art of agreeing without seeming to have preconcerted it, and thus the king, whom distrust alone could lead to have an opinion of his own, ran no risk of adopting any other than their's.

"Has your Majesty worked with him during the day?" she asked.

"Two hours, I tell you; and such work! Adding up millions."

"And your Majesty objects to that?" said Richelieu.

"Millions of deficit, Marshal. Every year worse. When Choiseul showed me this gulf, I thought I should become dizzy. We receive one hundred and seventy-two millions; we spend three hundred and fifty-seven.—Count up."

"But there must be some mistake, sire."

"Not at all. The total of our receipts is three hundred and twelve millions. Of this, one hundred and forty millions are already pledged. Deficit, one hundred and twenty-five millions. It is plain enough. Five hundred thousand livres a day, if you like it better."

"What is that for France?"

"Oh, ho! you also belong to the number?"

"Of what, sire."

"Of those designated by the court of accounts in its last remonstrance. There,—read. Here on this page."

Richelieu took the paper and read:

"'Your Majesty cannot too much distrust those who, in order to quench the insatiable thirst which they have for your gifts—'

"I have never asked for anything," said the duke, pausing.

"No—you have only taken—without asking"

"Sire!"

"Come! we will not grow angry! It was in Germany that you took, I know,—not in France. Have I ever seemed to owe you a grudge for it? But finish the sentence. It was the end of it I thought of, when I gave it to you to read."

"'——magnify to you the wealth of the nation. The zeal of your subjects is inexhaustible, but their ability does not equal their zeal.'

"There they are, the insolent scoundrels," said the duke, as he returned the paper to the king. "With what do they want us to carry on the war?"

"They would prefer that we should not carry it on at all. But as we cannot give them this satisfaction just at present, we have contrived another. I have just ordered that my plate should be carried to the mint."

"That is great and magnanimous, sire."

"Yes?—Then I have no doubt I shall be imitated. You, and all the court with you, will receive to-morrow an invitation to do the same. Well, what is the matter? One would think that you did not approve of the arrangement."

And in fact this blow had somewhat stunned him. For the plate of the noble duke was indeed very magnificent. But he soon recovered.

"To the mint, then!" he exclaimed.

And his decision was made. The next morning there was no longer a dish in his possession. As we have said, all that he took or received with one hand, he was always ready to give back with the other for the king and for *la France*.

XLV.

A BANKRUPT GOVERNMENT.

But it was very curious to contemplate this government, which regularly every year devoured half the income of the next. *Curious*, we say, for there were still very few persons who looked upon it as terrifying. The deficit had become the normal state of things. People had grown accustomed to it in time of peace, and it was found natural that it should be doubled during the war.

Not that the parliaments in their remonstrances, and the political economists in their books, neglected to attack such a state of things; the government had not yet thought of doing as it concluded to do four years afterwards at the petition of the comptroller general Laverdy, namely, to prohibit all publications in regard to the finances. But it was with their warnings as with those of the pulpit; many did not listen to them; and many although they listened could not become alarmed. The longer the car had been rolling on towards the abyss, the more they seemed to imagine that it would roll on for an indefinite length of time. The king, in spite of his listlessness, was at times one of those who was the most concerned at it. "What would a merchant do," he once asked the abbé Terray, "if he should see his affairs in the same state as mine?" "He would go and drown himself, sire," said the abbé.

And accordingly the gloomy king drowned himself after his own fashion. He blunted as well as he could, by the distractions of dissipation, the consciousness of this overwhelming ruin, of which he had neither the courage, nor the strength, nor even the desire to become the reformer.

Since the time of Colbert, the cardinal de Fleury alone had drawn up a budget in which the expenses,—at least on paper,—did not surpass the receipts; and he had succeeded in this only on account of a long peace, and by considerably reducing the army, and giving up the navy.

In the budget of 1726, the expenses were reduced to one hundred and eighty-two millions, a sum equal and even inferior to that of the ordinary receipts.

This total, which may be considered very small, was far from being as small as it seems.

In the first place, one hundred and eighty-two millions was at that time equivalent to at least three hundred millions of our money.

In the second place, the population has doubled. These three hundred millions would accordingly be equivalent to six hundred.

Finally a great number of expenses defrayed at the present time by the central exchequer, were then defrayed by the provinces. Thus, for instance, in this same budget of 1726, the public works were set down at only four millions.

To make amends, however, in spite of reductions which had appeared exorbitant, the king's household figures there still for twenty-one millions, (thirty-two or three of the present time; nearly one hundred thousand francs a day.) Now the king in 1726, was Louis XV., then sixteen years old, already married, but without children, without mistresses, without expensive tastes, and respectfully submissive to the old minister who had laid out the plan of expenses. With the dominion of the passions all must change. The fixed and acknowledged expenses will receive but little increase. The king will even consent willingly to their reduction, and it will be no sacrifice to him, for splendor wearies him. He feels himself lost in the

immense galleries of his ancestor; he belittles to the best of his ability, the palace of Louis XIV. But when he is seen to retrench a million in the expenditures which at least serve to keep up the dignity of the crown,—it is a sign,—alas!—that he is going to throw away two, if not more, through those channels in which is lost, together with the royal gold, all the royal dignity. And besides, you may be almost certain that these very economies which he allows to be trumpeted abroad, will never be put into execution. He has not courage to carry out those which are worth it; he is told that it is not worth his while to trouble himself about the smaller ones; and, in fact, a few crowns clipped from so many millions, would be a mere farce. If the poverty arrive at its height, he will throw his plate into the furnaces of the mint, but he will not give up a louis of the expenses of the Parc-aux-Cerfs.

This very day, the alarming results of the comptroller-general's calculations had not prevented his returning to the subject of his gaming funds, in the presence of the duke de Choiseul. We have already heard that Monsieur de Silhouette had succeeded in inducing him to give these up; and we have seen how heavily the privation weighed upon him. Three or four days after he had given it up he had begun to devise means of recovering it. He dared not claim it again. Monsieur de Silhouette was a grave personage; and, moreover, the public were acquainted with the transaction. The king had been commended, the minister still more so. So that in this direction there was nothing to be effected.

The king had accordingly consulted the duke de Choiseul. "We shall see,"—the duke had said; but he asked nothing better than to set the king once more upon his old track. It was a piece of good fortune to have it in his power to perform such a service for the king, and Choiseul had accordingly

almost promised to supply him with the necessary funds. So that the king, after having sent for him on quite a different business, thought only of the money when his minister arrived.

He led him into his cabinet.

"Well, Monsieur the duke, what news?"

"Despatches from Germany—"

"Ah! from Germany—" said the king, in the tone of a man who receives quite a different answer from that which he had expected.

General news,—grave, important news, be it understood, interested him but little. He would at any time willingly lose the thread of an important communication in order to hear an anecdote from the city. "We have news from Bavaria," he wrote one day to Madame de Châteauroux. "It bears date the 13th of December; *but I have not seen it yet.*" And this was written the 3d of January. Madame de Châteauroux, who aspired to play the part of Agnes Sorel, was excessively annoyed at this strange indifference; Madame de Pompadour, on the contrary, drew her own advantage from it.

The king appeared to care little for knowing the contents of the despatches; but the minister was willing to let him remain in suspense a little longer, in regard to what he so much wished to know.

"Yes, sire, from Germany. It appears that everything goes on tolerably well. The campaign commenced rather late in June."

"Which was ridiculous enough," said the king.

"Provisions were scanty, transportation difficult."

"According to the contractors."

"Perhaps so, but the marshal de Broglie is established in Hesse. They are now putting Hanover under contribution."

"Poor Hanover! After Richelieu, Broglie! Has an engagement taken place?"

"Yes, near Clostercamp."

"The whole army?"

"One corps only, commanded by the marquis de Castries. They relieved Wesel, which the duke of Brunswick was upon the point of taking. He came very near beating us."

"And these contributions," said the king, "which they are levying in Hanover,—are we to have none of them?"

"No, sire. We think ourselves very fortunate that they serve to defray a part of the expenses of the army."

"But, I suppose there will at least be something to deduct from the allotted sum?"

"On the contrary, the calculations have already proved too small. We shall be obliged to add several millions."

"But at any rate, have you some money for me? Am I to be the last one served?"

"Your Majesty can command anything. But you are aware, sire, how many eyes are fixed upon you at this time."

"You say that the duke of Brunswick came very near beating us?"

"And he would have beaten us, sire, if it had not been for the admirable devotion of an officer of the regiment of Auvergne, the chevalier d'Assas."

"Another one to be paid," murmured the king.

"No, sire; he is dead."

"Ah!"

"They were about to fall into an ambuscade. D'Assas, who marched at the head of the column, found himself suddenly surrounded by enemies. They ordered him to be silent or he was a dead man. 'To the rescue!'—he shouted,—'these are enemies.' And he fell pierced with a thousand wounds."

But the king had something else to do besides admire those who lost their lives for him. He wanted his gaming funds; and he returned to the subject with the pertinacity of a child who resists too long a refusal. The minister perceived that unless he wished to put the king's gratitude out of the question, this was the moment to yield.

"Sire," he said, "having taken all things into consideration, I have found that it will perhaps not be impossible to gratify your wish. A few private retrenchments from the funds of my department* would indemnify you for what you have thought fit to give up."

"And no one will know of it?"

"No one."

"And when they see that I play?"

"The king is not obliged to give explanations of his actions."

He accepted. Two days afterwards, the affair was public. Who had betrayed the secret? The minister perhaps; perhaps the king himself, without suspecting it. But he continued to imagine that no one saw any harm in it;—and as stolen fruit is always sweeter, it is said, than that of one's own trees,—he had never played with more pleasure than with this money purloined from diplomatic intrigues.

XLVI.

THE KING AND HIS MINISTER.

But to return to the edict. Once satisfied, the king appeared rather more disposed to talk about business. He inquired about the details of the campaign, recurred to the death of d'Assas, and spoke of him with commendation. He even

* Foreign affairs.

made a memorandum of some observations to be suggested to the count de Belle-Isle, the minister of war. In short, he thought of everything except the subject in regard to which he had sent for the minister.

But as the duke was leaving him, the king cried:

"Ah! I was forgetting. You are to draw me up an edict, if you please, in regard to the Protestants."

"But, sire, all the measures which can possibly be taken against them, have been taken."

"I did not say against them."

"It is to be then—"

"What your friends the encyclopedists require. What, does it not suit you?"

"It is a very serious matter, sire."

"And therefore, you see that I charge you with it, and not the count de Saint-Florentin, whose business it would be."

"It is a great honor, sire; but—"

He was greatly embarrassed. To object to it, would be to deny the principles which the king knew to be his; yet it did not suit him at the present moment to change anything in regard to the old severities. We have seen that it was peculiarly necessary for him to contrive a reply to give to any one who might accuse him of weakening Catholicism; that he particularly, must seek to cover with the ancient drapery of intolerance, all that he began to dare against the old Romish spirit. Moreover, he was not a man to torment himself by thinking of the sufferings which must necessarily be continued by this policy. When the general attains his object, he very easily takes his part of the fatigues and evils to which he is about to expose his soldiers. Thus proceeded Monsieur de Choiseul. It cost him no more to leave a part of the population under the dominion of unjust, cruel laws, than to

send a regiment to the war in Germany, or a frigate to Pondicherry.

"So you do not think it a good idea?" resumed the king.

"I do not say that, sire. But I repeat that it is a serious matter. I should like to reflect. Your Majesty is not accustomed to make such sudden resolutions."

"This was in truth a point which aroused the uneasiness of the minister. He trembled lest he might discover in the determination of the king the influence of some rival.

"You are surprised at that?" said Louis XV. "Perhaps it is not wonderful that you should be. But I know from experience that what I do not set about immediately, I never do at all. Besides, the edict will be discussed in the council."

"But I should like your Majesty to inform me at least of its grounds."

"Well, we will talk of it again."

"Has your Majesty any other commands?"

"No.—But stay. When will you send me something?"

"Immediately, if your Majesty wishes."

"No. Not this evening. I have something else to do."

XLVII.

THE KING'S EDICT.

"What can he have to do?" thought the minister, as he took his departure. And he tried in vain to console himself by the reflection that he should hear the next day from Madame de Pompadour; he saw the king already throwing off his guardianship, or choosing other guardians.

The king thought very little of any such thing; he was only delighted, though without explaining to himself why, to feel

himself once more disposed to do something of his own accord. It was like the pleasure of the child, which finds itself able, without knowing how, to take a few steps all alone.

He reflected for a few moments, then as if proud of his new way of proceeding, and desirous to display it, he returned to the marquise.

She was alone. The duke de Richelieu, as she told the king, had gone to give some orders concerning the fête at Bellevue.

"Marquise," he said, "I wish this matter finished. I am going to try my hand on this edict, which they pretend is so difficult to draw up. You are going to serve me again as secretary. Write:

"Although firmly resolved to live and die in the Catholic faith, and to endure no attack of any kind whatsoever, against its rights, honors, or privileges, yet as it has been represented to us that a part of our subjects have never yet been induced to embrace the truth, it has appeared to us that there is room for the modification of our previous edicts, put forth in the supposition that there existed but one religion in our kingdom.

"Our non-Catholic subjects will continue disqualified, in any case, under any form or denomination possible, to constitute a party in the State. They will remain subjected to all the general ordinances, including those relative to the external observance of the fêtes of the Church. No privilege can be granted them; no right which they might not have in common with all our subjects, will result from the present edict.

"Our intentions thus declared, we have commanded, and now command, as follows:

"Art. I. The civil incapacitation to which our non-Catholic subjects have been liable until now, from the fact of their non-Catholicity, is and remains abolished.

"Art. II. Their declarations of births, marriages, or deaths, may be received by the officers of justice, without the intervention of the priests.

"Art. III. There shall be now, as always, but one public worship, that of the Catholic religion. But—"

The king considered, not without embarrassment, how he should continue this article, when some one was heard to scratch at the door. He opened it. A page presented himself.

"His reverence Father Desmarêts requests to know whether his Majesty will have the goodness to receive him for a few moments."

"Father Desmarêts, marquise!" said the king, turning suddenly. "What does he want with me?"

"Ah! sire, he has scented the edict."

"It is impossible."

"For a Jesuit?"

"Must I see him?"

"Certainly. But let me go out."

"Au revoir, then."

"At supper."

"Good."

She disappeared by one door, and a few seconds afterwards Desmarêts entered by the other.

XLVIII.

THE KING'S CONFESSOR.

She was not mistaken. The confessor had scented the edict. But it was not this edict, projected scarcely an hour before, which had brought him to Versailles this evening.

Richelieu had met him, pacing gravely and gloomily to-

wards the apartment of the king. These two very dissimilar confidants of the faults of the same man, had always regarded each other with considerable jealousy. Living personifications of the two principles which strove together in the king's heart, it was generally more or less perceptible from their manner towards one another, which of the two had for the moment the upper hand in this domain so constantly tossed to and fro between heaven and hell. The same feelings were, however, displayed in a very different manner by these two men. Richelieu when he triumphed, only glanced down at Desmarêts, from the height of his importance; but Desmarêts triumphed with his eyes more humbly cast down, his voice sweeter, and his demeanor more lowly than ever. And at the moments when he himself knew not whether he were conqueror or conquered, his deportment was a singular mingling of resigned pride, and proud humility.

Richelieu amused himself, when he had an opportunity, by *drawing out* the old Jesuit, as he said. With the vanity which his successes with the ladies had encouraged, he actually fancied that he had very little trouble in causing him to betray his most private feelings, never perceiving that he began by betraying his own, and that Desmarêts had reached the inmost recesses of his thoughts, while he himself had scarcely touched those of Desmarêts.

"Ah! good evening, Father, good evening!" he cried. "Are you going to the king?"

"If his Majesty condescend to receive me."

"If his Majesty condescend? What! is not Father Desmarêts always welcome,—day and night?"

He thought himself very cunning and mischevious in reminding Desmarêts of the evening when he had came as far as the ante-chamber, only to be told by the valets that the king

was with his mistress. But it was this very recollection that the Jesuit was resolved to brave. He came now in the evening precisely to wipe out the old affront by having himself announced to the king, wherever he might be, and in whatever society he might chance to be engaged.

"Monsieur the duke is very good," he said.

"I will not detain you, Father. His Majesty is occupied, it is true."

"Ah!"

"But in a very holy manner. About the affairs of the Huguenots."

"Some edict, without doubt?"

"Yes indeed—an edict—the like of which we have not yet seen. Go, Father,—go."

And he himself went on, with a sneer and a laugh.

"On my honor," he said, "the edict is in great peril. This infernal man will never allow it to come to anything. And he will be so much the more enraged because he expects something quite different—persecutions,—dragoons. I should like to see his face when he learns the true state of the case."

And the good Father too, sneered and laughed as he went on his way; and he better knew why. In the first place, he guessed well enough from the air of the marshal, what must be the spirit of the edict. And thanks to one of his trusty friends, Richelieu's secretary, he had for the last two days had in his pocket a copy of the petition which had just been read to the king. And in these tolerant thoughts which had entered the mind of Louis XV., he saw a means of gaining the accomplishment of his designs.

A great council had been held at Paris, consisting of the principal leaders of the order. They had agreed, as previously, at the archbishop's,—in acknowledging the imminence of their

danger, which made appalling progress. Some, particularly the Provincial, persisted in thinking that they ought to await the blow, and fall without a struggle, or conquer without warfare; the others, while acknowledging that a public resistance would but aggravate the evils of their situation, wished that it should at least be more clearly ascertained how they stood with the king, and what might be expected from him. It had been decided that his confessor should go to him, ask him the question frankly, and warn him that he must give a decision. Desmarêts, who was charged with this mission, was one of those who hoped the least from it. He had brought forward as an objection, the natural indecision of the king, and his incapability of carrying out his own most decided wishes; he had said that all might be lost, with scarcely a chance of gaining anything. But the thing once decided, he had obeyed, as a Jesuit alone knows how to obey. The will of his Order, represented by these assembled Fathers, had become his own. He marched to the combat without fear, as without hope, equally ready to dare much or little, to press forward or to draw back.

XLIX.

POLICY.

"Enter, Father," said the king. "To what do I owe the pleasure—"

"You are surprised to see me, sire?"

"Why—"

"Yes, I asked myself as I came, what business I had here. The king is willing to be lost, I thought, let him be lost; but to drag with him to perdition, France,—the Church—"

"This language—Father—"

"Perchance God may punish me for not having spoken thus to you sooner, more clearly. I shall speak no more to you of your immorality. I have performed my duty on this point. I have said all to you that I had to say, but in vain. But lately, after resolutions and promises which I began to believe serious, you mocked—I will not say me; the king of France is perfectly at liberty to mock Father Desmarêts,—but God, of whom the Scripture says; '*Be not deceived, God is not mocked.*' And accordingly the punishment has followed hard upon the offence."

"The punishment?" said the king, astonished.

"Yes; and it is a double punishment, since you are not conscious of it. 'Seeing, they may see,' saith the Scripture, 'and not perceive; and hearing, they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.'"

"And where," said the king, "do you perceive this blindness of which you speak? I have sinned, but not without knowing it. Would to God it were so!"

"A king is not responsible only for that evil which he himself does; he is also responsible, perhaps even more so, for the evil which he allows to be done. Well, sire, have you reflected on the evil which you are allowing to be done? Do you prevent that which it is in your power to prevent? Do you punish that which it is in your power to punish? Do you lament over that which it is in your power neither to prevent nor punish?"

"If I were obliged to punish or deplore all the evil which is said or done in France, should I hold out long? No king ever was saved, if this be necessary."

"In truth, no king was ever saved, if he refused to offer to

heaven, for his sins and those of his people, such atonements as it lay in his power to offer."

"Yes—that is it. We are to be the servants of the Church, your servants more especially,—and then we may do what we like."

"What you like? No, sire. You will find us near you whenever you sin. Before you sin, we will adjure you, in the name of God, to desist; afterwards, we will be there to offer you pardon, still in the name of God. We are able to offer it,—but pay its price we cannot, if we should give our blood. It is for you to pay this price; and with what? If the treasure has not been amassed beforehand, where shall it be procured at the last moment?"

This embraces the whole of Jesuitism. We are to pay for heaven, instead of receiving it by faith, accompanied by works, as a pure gift of the mercy of God.

"Yes," he repeated; "where shall it be procured? Ah! what a frightful death! The death of a sovereign forced to exclaim, in expiring, 'I have had twenty years, thirty years, half a century, in which to labor for the glory of God—and I have done nothing!'"

"Nothing?" cried the king.

"Nothing. For so long as there is something to be done, which can be done,—and which is yet neglected,—nothing is done. Would you look upon an enemy as vanquished, sufficiently vanquished, at least, for your glory and safety, whom you had not crushed more than you have crushed these execrable principles with which you permit your States to be overrun? Do you suppose your allies disposed to praise your sincerity,—those allies whom you allow to be threatened and insulted as we are threatened and insulted?"

"Allies!" murmured the king. "Since when?"

"Since when? Listen, sire. Since kings began to exist, there has been of necessity an alliance between those who command, and those who preach obedience. Besides this, there must stand above those who command in the name of the earth, those who command in the name of heaven,—and the first have never endeavored to rid themselves of the second with impunity. This principle of obedience,—without which all your power would be swept away like a vapor, by the first wind,—dwells in us, sire,—our society is at the present day its representative, its embodiment. Do you ask by what right? Woe be to that sovereign who in these days when all is tottering, should pause to seek our right! *We are*,—that is sufficient. We do not begin, in the midst of the tempest, to discuss the history, the form, the nature of the rock which offered us a shelter."

"And if the rock also should totter?" said the king. "If there should be danger of our being swept away with it?"

"There is more danger of this without it. Yes, sire; whatever opinions and prejudices may exist in regard to us, we have become, from the force of circumstances alone, the representatives of the past, the depositories of all traditions. In our soil, as if in their native ground, all monarchies as well as the Church have struck deep root. Let this soil be torn up, and you will see whether the plough of the age will spare one more than the other. If you wish to precipitate yourself, in the train of the philosophers, into that new world which they speak of opening to the nations, then I have nothing to say to you. First lay your crown upon the threshold, if you would not have it presently rolled into the mire. But if you care to keep it upon your head, then no more of these subterfuges which lead to the perdition of your own soul and of your kingdom. You must be openly the friend and supporter of

those who cannot defend themselves without defending you, nor fall without your falling also. The time no longer exists when sensible people might assert that our society is not the Church, is not religion. Religion and the Church were in existence before us, but will they exist after us? That is the question. It is no longer the time to inquire how we gained, or allowed to be given us such a position as we now hold; but it is necessary to understand that such is our position, and that whoever at the present day is not for us, is necessarily against us, against religion, and against monarchy, and against all that monarchy, religion, and the Church have to uphold in this world. After that, consider what you had better do."

L.

A HARD STRUGGLE.—VICTORY.

Thus spoke the king's confessor. He was pertinacious, cutting, and inexorable, and moreover, he was right. As we have already said, then as now, Jesuitism was Catholicism incarnate. In spite of any precautions which might be taken, and of any illusions which might be courted, a rupture with Jesuitism, was a rupture with Catholicism; it was opening to the light of day all the abysses slumbering in the shadows of the past. And a vague instinct had already long ago whispered to the king all that he had just heard. Had he been bolder, more active, he would have been seen from his youth at the head of the champions of the past. He might have been broken perhaps, but would never have yielded.

"I am too old," he said.

"Too old to serve God?" asked the Jesuit. "You are not too old to sin against him."

"Father," interrupted the king, "we are not now in the confessional. Do not oblige me to remind you that you are before the king, and in his palace. Well,—what is the matter? What are you doing?"

Desmarêts made no reply. He kneeled slowly with his head bowed and his hands joined, before a seat upon which he had placed a crucifix.

"Oh God!" he at length said, "it is true that I am in the palace of the king, and in his presence; but I am none the less in yours.* Have I gone beyond my duty? Have I failed in respect to your anointed? If I have done so, pardon me, Lord. But above all, do not let him suffer for my fault; let not my imprudence be a pretext for him to harden his heart. Let him break the vase, if he will, but let him gather up its contents. Let him refuse to me, a sinner, the account of his deeds, if he but give it to you, to you, my God! You have given him for a long time a high place in this world; you have willed that he should be born to effect the salvation or perdition of a multitude of your children. You have committed to him not one, not five, not ten talents, as to the servant in the parable, but a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand. What has he done with them, my God, and what will he bring to you, when at the last day you ask him for the interest? You established him in your place to make your laws respected, and behold these laws are violated with impunity. You destined him to be a terror to the impious, and behold impiety appears boldly. Eldest son of the Church, he is upon the point of abandoning his mother, and of allowing her most devoted defenders to be driven from her side. Most Christian king, he is about to extend his hand to heresy—"

* The Romanists employ the second person plural in addressing the Deity. Tr.

"It is false," cried the king.

But Desmarèts continued, without pausing, or changing his tone.

"——He is going to restore to error the hope of once more raising her altars—"

"It is false," repeated the king.

But he was shaken. The tone, the calmness of the Jesuit moved him. He shuddered to hear himself spoken of, in his own presence, as the dead are spoken of.

"——He must have been very guilty then, oh God, that you should have forsaken him so far! He must have appeared to you very unworthy of defending your cause, that you should have allowed him to lose all abhorrence for your enemies!—"

"Read," cried the king, "read!"

"What is this?" said Desmarets, slowly turning his gaze from his ebony crucifix, and glancing at the paper extended to him by the king.

"It is my edict. Read it. See whether I forsake the faith which you accuse me of denying!"

Desmarèts arose. The hand which held the paper trembled. He had reached the last line before his look appeared to have quitted the first, which he seemed to be reading slowly, word for word.

"Good God!" he murmured, "good God!"

"Well?"

"Words at the commencement; deeds afterwards; and the deeds wipe out the words."

And again he fell upon his knees; he again clasped his hands. His eyes wandered from the crucifix to the edict; for the paper had dropped from his hand, and fallen upon the floor before the crucifix.

"My God!' he cried. "Behold what is offered you! Instead of an active faith, vain protestations. Zeal professedly, but treason in reality! He wishes to live and die, he says, in the bosom of your Church, and he abandons the attempt to bring those back who have abandoned it. He declares that he has faith in her, and he permits other instructions beside hers. He guarantees to her her prerogatives, and leaves in peace those who deny them. In public, her worship alone may be celebrated; but in private, heresy may freely carry on its own. As if, Lord, there were any difference in your eyes between an insult in the midst of a city, and an insult in the solitude of a desert; between an abomination committed in the day, and one committed at night! What will this pretended most Christian kingdom be, when all this happens, but a whited sepulchre, in which uncleanness gathers and increases? What will this king be—"

"Enough, Father," said Louis XV. "Let it be as God will. I should hold my salvation too dearly bought, if it must be paid for by the continued sufferings of so many people. No! Do not speak of it again. Let them be converted; I am most willing; but I have permitted their persecution already too long. This edict shall be put into execution, Father."

"No."

"You said no,—I think?"

"I said no."

"It shall be executed, I tell you."

"No."

"It is my will."

"It is not the will of God."

"It is mine. Unless a miracle take place—"

But he could not go on. Desmarêts stood with his arm raised, his eye flashing, and seemed but to have a word to

speak to call forth the miracle. The king recoiled, silent, startled. It might have been taken for an apparition, with a man terrified at having evoked it.

"A miracle!" said Desmarèts, slowly. "If one be needed, it will take place. Where? When? How? God only knows! But He will not permit the consummation of this apostacy. The eldest son of the Church shall not batter down her ramparts. Let him reflect and tremble. At the first stroke, his hand would wither."

And he let his hand drop, and, with his eyes cast down and his head bowed, as if beneath the weight of the maledictions which could be seen in his glance, he quitted the apartment.

The king had held out, but only with the most violent effort. He had in these few moments exhausted all the powers of his mind, so unused to exerting a will of its own. A complete prostration had followed the excitement of the struggle. A weak man is his own most redoubtable enemy and constant conqueror.

LI.

MADAME DU DEFFANT.

Let us return to Paris.

Towards the close of the same week, the Staff Officers of Philosophy were one evening assembled at the house of the marquise du Deffant.

They talked. Of what did they not talk! We have already described conversation at an era when newspapers were not in existence,—when all the news that now comes to us in a printed form was circulated by means of lively gossip,—and when liberty, banished from the press, took refuge in the saloons.

A saloon, in the sense assigned to the word by custom, sig-

nified essentially a saloon presided over by a woman. A man, however distinguished he might be, and however frequented his house, might have *re-unions*, dinners, suppers, but he could not have a *saloon*.

Each saloon, besides its casual visitors, had its special *habitués*. "What woman of talent could do without her *menagerie?*" said Madame de Tencin, whose two principal *beasts*, to speak in her own style, were Fontenelle and Montesquieu!

Now, of all the saloons of the day, that of Madame du Deffant was at this time the most in vogue. Madame Geoffrin, her rival, was equally clever, and had an equal number of friends; but—and it was an important point—they felt a little less at their ease with her. The bold spirits feared offending her, and the timid preferred going where it was less dangerous to be bold. They dined with pleasure with Madame Geoffrin; but they liked better to philosophize at Madame du Deffant's.

And at both places, moreover, was always to be met a woman who began to dispute the pre-eminence with them,—Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse. Her equivocal birth, peculiar countenance, great wit, and tolerable amount of learning, had soon made her the fashion. Madame du Deffant had received her into her house, after she lost her sight, in order to receive the guests, and still more in order to keep her company, for she could not endure being alone, even for an instant. To converse and to listen to conversation, was to her not merely a pleasure, but a necessity, the greatest, and, in some sort, the only one; her all and her existence; a mania, for that matter, which was that of the age. In truth, the eighteenth century was pretty well represented by this blind old woman philosophizing in her arm-chair.

In the midst of this vortex, of which it pleased her to be the

centre, Madame du Deffant was, according to her own statement, the woman most *ennuyée* in all France. She spoke of her *ennui* as Voltaire did of his ailments,—that is to say, unceasingly, and to everybody. She had commenced long before becoming blind, as Voltaire had long before becoming infirm. A singular compliment to the witty crowd who regaled her with their prattling! But they did not heed it. It was of little importance that she continued to complain of *ennui*, so long as they continued to amuse themselves so well in her saloon.

She had lately become sensible of that which she ought to have foreseen. Her dependent was becoming her protectress; her saloon was now but that of Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse. What was to be done? Dismiss her? But there were plenty of people ready to establish her in a house of her own, and this new saloon once opened, who would remain faithful to that of the poor blind woman? A final discovery had nearly brought on a rupture, which, however, only took place four years afterwards. Three of the most constant visitors of the baronne's soirées had been convicted of calling during the day, in order to converse with Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse. "It is a viper which I have cherished in my bosom," cried the mistress of the house at this news. She would have overlooked a love affair; she forgave her very willingly afterwards, when people began to give this name to her friendship for d'Alembert. But to converse out of her presence, to deprive her of a portion of her daily bread by carrying off the best of the news and prattle, could in her eyes be nothing less than the most abominable treason. It caused an endless series of misunderstandings, disputes and reconciliations, whose history must be read in the writings of the time, in order to form an idea of the importance which the household of two women could assume, in the vast inactivity of French society.

LII.

CONVERSATION IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

It has struck nine. The saloon is almost full it would be still more crowded, if we were not in the beginning of August,—of *Augustus* as Monsieur de Voltaire would have us say. We will enter and endeavor to seize a few words from the midst of this heap of nothings presenting themselves in grave costume, and of serious questions debated in trifling tones.

"It is overwhelming!—Come Monsieur de la Caille,* tell us something more about it. What a pity that Monsieur de Fontenelle should be dead!"

"Why, Madame?"

"Because he was the only person who could tell us poor women such things without terrifying us too much."

"Why do you ask us about them, then?"

"Go on,—malicious!"

"Well! It is just as I had the honor of saying. I have calculated, within a few millions, the number of leagues which separate us from a certain star which I have been studying for a long time. I discovered—but I will not tell you the number. You could never remember it. Listen. Light travels, I told you—"

"About seventy leagues a second."

"Good. How long a time then do you imagine was required for my star to become visible?"

"Six months."

"Nonsense!"

* The astronomer.

"Six years!"

"Pooh!"

"How long then?"

"More than nine thousand years."*

"Ah! Good heavens! I shall dream of that!"

"Dream of it, Madame, indeed."

"Nine thousand years! And seventy leagues a second!"

"Nine thousand years. There may be stars created eighty centuries ago, which we have never yet seen."

"Poor Moses!"

This was the conclusion which was drawn from all the discoveries of the age. They little imagined that science was one day to make peace with the author of Genesis, by finding in the succinct account of Moses, so sarcastically spoken of, all the most exact information which men have since been able to extort from the secrets of creation.

"Well! So the beautiful Madame Baillet at length consents to allow poor d'Herbigny to love her?"

"Yes? And who told you so?"

"He himself."

"Ha! Ha!"

"D'Herbigny is no boaster."

"Oh! no."

"If he said so, it was because it is true."

"It *was true*."

"What! Is it no longer so?"

"It never has been."

"I cannot comprehend."

"It is thus. After more than a year of severity, she said to him one fine morning: 'D'Herbigny, I want your portrait.'

* Much larger calculations have since been made.

He was immediately in the clouds. He flies to an artist. He sits six hours that same day, six hours the next. In two days the portrait is finished and framed. He hastens, with his likeness, to throw himself at the feet of his charmer. 'Perfect!' she exclaims; and she rings. The porter makes his appearance, instead of the waitingmaid. 'Master Pierre,' she says, 'here is what I promised to give you. Put that in your lodge; and when the original comes—you will recognize him, will you not?' 'Oh! yes Madame' 'Tell him that I am not at home.'"

"Ah! good evening, my dear Abbé, good evening! So you have been remembered at last?"

"At last, as you say."

"I hope it is at least a fat living, since you were allowed to sigh after it so long?"

"*Fat*, no. My aspirations never rose so high. It is what one may call a *good* living."

"Six or seven thousand livres income?"

"About ten."

"Ah, ha!"

"I tell you the king of Prussia is a madman."

"A hero."

"A hypocrite."

"A wise man."

"A tyrant."

"A friend of mankind."

"A robber of kingdoms—"

"As Cæsar was."

"A scribbler of paper—"

"As Marcus Aurelius was."

"You are flattering the enemy of your country."

"I am doing justice to a great man."

"You rejoice at his successes."

"Because they are triumphs of reason."

"Of reason—with cannon balls!"

"You would prefer thunder bolts, like your good friends of the Vatican?"

"He alone has lighted more fires—"

"Decidedly, you can pardon none but those lighted at the stake."

"You do not know?—"

"What?"

"That the abbé de Saint-Marcelin has a living at last."

"Come, come!"

"I have just heard him say so himself. A *good* one he said."

"Why he is a furious encyclopedist."

"What does that prove?"

"It proves without doubt that he is a man of talent. But—"

"Is it not better that this living should profit a man of talent, than that it should fall into the hands of a fool?"

"Yes. I perceive a time is coming when the first qualification for advancement in the Church will be not to believe in God. Here, abbé!"

"What do you want?"

"Is there a God?"

"Certainly—since I am an abbé."

"Monsieur, the tradition is positive and unalterable. It was from Montmatre to Saint-Denis, where the abbey now is, that the saint of that name carried his head in his hands."

"No, Monsieur, no. Reason does not admit of our believing in so long a journey. A few steps,—that is well authenticated. Is it not so, Madame la marquise?"

"Why so, dear councillor? It is only the first step which is difficult."

"What is going on at Versailles?"

"Nothing of importance."

"And the marquise?"

"More in favor than ever."

"But they say that the king appears singularly *ennuyé*."

"She is only the more secure for that. It is just at such times that he leaves everything to her."

"A great fête is spoken of, at Bellevue."

"Yes, on Tuesday."

"And the abbé de Narniers?"

"Remains preacher to the king."

"And the other,—he is still to preach on Monday?"

"On Monday, at Saint-Sulpice."

"Good."

"This Monsieur de Buffon, with all his fine style, is sometimes so vulgar, that—"

"What indignation, Mademoiselle!"

"Did you see him just now, beside me? His legs crossed, his head thrown back, his eyes half closed. He fancied himself alone, apparently."

"He was hunting out some phrase."

"Yes—wait. I tried to begin a conversation. I spoke to him of his style,—for you know it is almost impossible to talk to him of anything else. 'What a happy mingling,' I said, 'of profundity and simplicity!' And Monsieur leaned him-

self back still farther. 'Oh! the devil!' he exclaimed, 'oh! the devil! When it is necessary to purify one's style, that is another part of speech!'* *Another part of speech! Another—*"

"By the way, is it true that he never writes except in his sword and lace ruffles?"

"I fancy, between ourselves, that he has never been seen in those famous working ruffles; but—"

"But he is capable of wearing them."

"At all events, he might at least put them on when he has a compliment to acknowledge."

"Especially a compliment from Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse."

"You flatter me, Monsieur."

"I am but just. Do you know what he said the other day to a friend who was reading to him some of his verses?"

"No."

"'That is beautiful,' he cried, 'beautiful—as prose!'"

"Was he jesting?"

"Not at all, it is his system."

"We shall see him erect a statue to prose, some of these days."

"To *his own* prose."

"Monsieur, if the taxes should be reduced one half, and if the strictest economy should regulate the employment of them, still we would never pay them willingly, if the farming of the revenues be still insisted upon. So long as the people see the rich intermediaries between themselves and the public funds, evidently thriving upon the sweat of *their* brow, you

* In the original, *C'est une autre paire de manches*; literally, *It is another pair of sleeves.* A vulgarism. Tr.

cannot rid them of the feeling that it is for *these* people they labor, not for the State. Knowing beforehand what the State will receive, each one is tempted to say,—every one in the lower classes does say,—that what he has paid will not augment the sum employed for public expenses by a sous. Bad reasoning, I admit, but it is incontestibly the reasoning of a multitude, and that is enough to make it advisable that the pretext should be done away with. The collecting of the taxes ought to remain in the hands of the government, and the collector should have a fixed salary; the poor man should feel when he pays, that he actually pays the government, and really contributes his little part to the necessities of the country."

"Poor Poinsinet!* Are you never going to cease laughing at him, vicomte?"

"Ha! ha! ha! I think I still see him reciting the Breton verses which I gave him as Russian!"

"He has a good deal of talent, however."

"Yes, indeed! His little piece, the *Cercle*, is one of the prettiest which has been written for a long time. But he has not a grain of common sense. The merest child could take him in. He is one of those beings born to be mystified."

"To be what?"

"*Mystified.*"

"That is not one of the academy's words, so far as I know."

"I should think not. We manufactured it, not three months ago, in honor of Poinsinet himself; and the academy does not enjoy the reputation of being very prompt."

"Hush! There is Duclos listening to us."

"Duclos has too much sense not to think as we do. Is it

* The dramatic author.

not true, Duclos, that the academy is not very quick in its movements?"

"*Make haste slowly.*"

"Yes,—but by going too slowly, you may break your necks,—in public opinion."

"It is not my fault, however."

"No, to be sure not. It is well known that you push the car on. You swear, in the very Louvre, loud enough to shake the colonnade."

"I? Who says so?"

"Oh, your colleagues—everybody."

"Ah! the hounds!—ah! the—"

"Hush now! We are not at the Louvre. See him going to swear, in order to prove that he never swears! You would have been the very man for cardinal Dubois."

"Much obliged."

"Why not? At the least contradiction, he swore, as you know, at the top of his voice; he threw away a great deal of precious time at it. One of his secretaries asked him if he would not do well to have a *swearer general?*"

"The place would be almost as good as that of screen to the king."

"Screen to the king!"

"Yes. Another *mystification*,—begging pardon for the word,—which we made Poinsinet swallow. We told him he had just been selected for this brilliant situation. Two days afterwards, when we had forgotten all about it, we heard that he was ill; and from what,—do you imagine? From having broiled his legs by standing before an infernally hot fire, in order, as he said, to accustom himself to his new duty."

"I tremble, Madame, lest you should think me presuming."

"Say on."

"The charming letter which you said you had received from Monsieur de Voltaire—"

"Well?"

"Might one dare to beg for a sight of it?"

"If you will promise me to show it to no one."

"To no one,—except those who charged me with the petition."

"Ah! It is a deputation, then, which I receive?"

"A deputation, as you say. Here are Chamfort and Saint Lambert, who have been charged to support my request. This letter—"

"See, here it is. But be prudent. Let none hear it, you understand, save friends. There are certain things—"

"Do not be uneasy, Madame. Here, Messieurs. Here—in the small saloon—"

"Read, Saint Lambert."

"'FERNEY, July 25, 1760.

"'The eloquent Cicero, Madame, without whom no Frenchman can think, always commenced his letters with these words: "If you are well, I am rejoiced at it; as for myself, I am well."

"'I am so unfortunate as to be quite the opposite of Cicero. If you are ill, I am grieved at it; as for myself, I am ill. Happily, I have made myself a nest in which I can live or die according to my own fancy. I have purchased estates around my hermitage; I have enlarged my sepulchre. If I dared, I should fancy myself wise, I am so happy. I have really lived only since the day when I selected this retreat. Any other sort of life would now be insupportable to me. Paris is essential to you; to me it would be death.

"'Would to heaven, Madame, that you could live as I do,

and that your charming society might augment my happiness. I congratulate you and Monsieur the president Hénault upon being frequently together, and being able mutually to console one another for the absurdities of this world.

"'You wish me to send you the works with which I employ myself when I neither plough nor sow. In fact, I scarcely know how I shall dare do so, I have become so bold with age. I can no longer write what I think; and I think so freely, that it is scarcely probable I can send my ideas by post. I shall have the honor, however, to send you one or two new cantos of *The Maid of Orleans*, which no one has seen as yet. If you want a picture of this ugly world, you may find one shortly in my *Universal History* of the follies of the human race. I have also set to work to render an account to myself, in alphabetical order, of all that I am to think about this world and the next,—for my own use, and perhaps, after my death, for the use of good people. I think I shall call it *Philosophical Dictionary*.

"'The semi-freedom with which people in France are beginning to write, is still nothing but a disgraceful chain. Accordingly, you must accustom yourself to a dearth of talents of every kind,—to smartness grown common, and genius rare;—to a perfect deluge of books on war, only to be beaten afterwards,—on finance, only to lack money as much as ever,—on population, only to be still in want of husbandmen and recruits,—in short, on all the arts, only to succeed in none.

"'We have, in fact, no native inventions. In the arts, we are silly savages compared with the Italians. In philosophy, we have learned a little that was good from the English, scarcely thirty years since.

"'The Spaniards have conquered a new world; the Portuguese have discovered the way to the Indies; the Arabs and Turks have founded powerful empires; my friend the czar

Peter has formed an empire of two thousand leagues extent in twenty years; and the Scythians of my empress Elizabeth have beaten my good Prussian king,—while our armies are routed by the peasants of Wolfenbüttel.

"'We have been so clever as to establish ourselves in the snows of Canada, among bears and beavers; while the English have peopled four hundred leagues of the most beautiful country in the world with their flourishing colonies,—and we suffer ourselves even to be chased out of Canada.

"'We build also, from time to time, a few vessels for the English; but we build them badly. When they condescend to capture them, they complain that we give them miserable sailers.

"'Upon my honor, our age is a miserable age!

"'You ask me what you will find the most interesting to read. Read the gazettes, Madame: everything in them is marvellous as a romance. One reads of vessels loaded with Jesuits; and one never wearies of wondering why they are driven out of only one kingdom as yet. One reads of the French being beaten in the four quarters of the globe,—of our ministers bundled out of office one after the other,—of our flat boats,—and of our descents—down the river of La Vilaine. One reads—

"'But you say you want to read something else besides gazettes. Well, I will mention all that may possibly amuse you. There, for instance, is *Infidelity opposed by—common sense*, by dear brother Menon, the confessor of king Stanislas; or the *Reconciliation of the understanding with religion*,—the *Norman reconciliation*, as some call it,—by bishop Pompignan, brother of the academician Pompignan, or the— But you live in the midst of these fine things, and it is rather for you to send them to me.

"'And yet there is one pleasure greatly to be preferred to all this; it is to watch the wide-spreading meadows becoming green, and the great harvests ripening slowly.

"'I beg your pardon, Madame, for speaking to you of a pleasure which is enjoyed by one's eyes alone. You no longer know any enjoyment save that of the intellect.

"'Apropos, have you a good digestion? I have become sensible, after much reflection upon this best of worlds, and upon the small number of the elect, that one is never truly unhappy so long as one has a good digestion. After all, the only thing is to end one's career comfortably. All the rest is *vanity of vanities*, as somebody says.

"'Accept my tender respects. V.'"

"Well, Monsieur de la Condamine, and our convulsionaires?"

"Most extraordinary."

"You are going to tell us about them, are you not?"

"If you choose.—But hush! There is Monsieur de Faillet, who was there—"

"As a spectator?"

"As a believer, no offence to you. Let us go a little further off.—Good. Well, upon this occasion, sister Françoise was to be crucified."

"To be—"

"Crucified,—positively,—I swear to you. A real cross,—good, strong nails. Ah, my hands and feet hurt me, whenever I think of what I saw. They pretend that they do not suffer, and that, according to them, is the great miracle."

"Who knows?"

"Who knows?—I should like to see you try it! To be sure it is not impossible that the pain yields a little to faith,

but sister Françoise suffered horribly, I promise you, although she might not choose to proclaim it. Although she did not cry out, she made grimaces enough to prove it."

"And the executioner, who—"

"The executioner,—no, the *assistant*, (*secouriste*,) as they call him, in their cant language, for all the knick-knacks, nails, swords, kicks, and so on, they call *assistance*, (*secours*)—the assistant was Father Cottu, of the Oratoire, aided by Father Guidi, a tall, thin man, with goggles, who exhausted himself in assuring the patient that the nails did not incommode her."

"And what did the patient say?"

"She deafened us all with declamations in a language which I did not understand, upon the evils of the Church, they informed me, and on the future reign of the saints."

"And the saints rubbed their hands, in the mean time?"

"No; they rubbed hers, with a certain water of Saint Pâris, their patron, which has the virtue, they say, of causing all pain to disappear."

"And how long did all this last?"

"More than three hours."

"And who was there besides Monsieur de Faillet?"

"Monsieur de Merinville, his parliamentary colleague, Monsieur de Janson, an officer in the mousquetaires, Monsieur de la Tour-du-pin, Monsieur de Lafont-Saint-Yenne, who went down upon his knees, from time to time, bathed in tears—a few others, besides."*

"And I tell you that Monsieur de Voltaire jests when he pretends to believe in the prodigious antiquity of the Chinese

* Monsieur de la Condamine afterwards wrote an account of all that he had witnessed in these strange assemblies.

and the Hindoos. No man ever lied as he does. And his admiration for Confucius, of whom scarcely anything is known! And his adoration of Julian the Apostate, of whom only too much is known! And his mania for asserting that the early Christians were scarcely persecuted at all! Do you imagine that he believes all this ridiculous or abominable stuff that he puts forth in his pamphlets?"

"Not all of it, I know; but perhaps more of it than one would think. By dint of repeating it, he impresses it upon his mind, and then—"

"I understand. By dint of lying, he becomes at last sincere. Really a sublime method of employing speech and reason!"

"Just as you please; but the antiquity of the Hindoos is nevertheless—"

"Again!—Well, let us ask Monsieur de Gebelin.—Ah! he was here just now. What has become of him?"

"He is yonder,—see, in that corner."

"But who is it that he is talking with?"

"It is a face I do not know."

LIII.

RABAUT AND GEBELIN.

We have long known this face, which was new to the defender of Monsieur de Voltaire and his ancient Hindoos. Gebelin's companion was Rabaut.

He had desired more closely to observe this brilliant society, whose scintillations dazzled all Europe, whose least whispers imposed silence upon the past, and seemed to open the future. Gebelin, who was received everywhere, had taken

him wherever he could see without being too much seen, hear without being obliged to talk, and judge without speaking.

They had retired into a corner, from whence they passed in review all that the current of the saloon was causing to come before their eyes.

"That man," said Gebelin, "whom you heard deciding upon the antiquity of the Hindoos, is one of those learned sheep who would deny the sun at noon, if Monsieur de Voltaire thought fit to deny it. His adversary is an old Jansenist."

"I had fancied," said Rabaut, "that I should see none but infidels here."

"I said Jansenist, take notice; I did not say believer. The Jansenism of the present day is often nothing more than a decent sort of infidelity. Many are Jansenists, just as others are infidels, from fashion, from opposition; many, while they are avowed infidels, belong nominally to the different religious parties. 'You are persecuted,' said Boindin to one of his friends, 'because you are a Jansenist atheist; but I am left in quietness, because I am a Molinist atheist.'

"In that group, yonder, you may recognize several of our friends of the other day, d'Holbach, Damilaville, d'Alembert, Grimm."

"And Helvétius?"

"He has received official orders not to show himself for several days."

"And Diderot?"

"He speaks his mind too plainly. Madame du Deffant hinted that she could dispense with his company. He comes every now and then, in order not to seem banished; and indeed he is not banished; but he himself prefers having more elbow-room than he generally has here. The marquise is willing enough to be an infidel, but not to break with religion.

Indeed, she has once or twice attempted to turn devotee; for you know that there is no medium, among the Catholics of the higher classes, between *high devotion*, as they call it, and infidelity. 'I am ennuyée half to death,' she said to her associates. 'Shall I not try a little of everything?' They laughed; and at last she laughed also. 'I will wait until I am a little older,' she said. So she is waiting."

"And how old is she, then?"

"Sixty-two or sixty-three."

"Who is that old gentleman, who pays her such assiduous attention?"

"The comte de Pont-de-Veyle, her lover."

"Ah!"

"At least he has held that situation for a long time. Nothing can be more innocent, for that matter, than their relations. In a certain set, a lover is looked upon as a necessary piece of furniture. A slight varnish of scandal is absolutely necessary, although there may not be the slightest inclination for it. It is in order to set off the reputation, one might fancy, just as patches set off the complexion. 'Do you not wonder,' said Pont-de-Veyle to her lately, 'how we have contrived to live thirty years without a single falling out?' 'My dear,' she said, 'it is because we have never loved each other.' And yet it was she who reproached Monsieur de Fontenelle with never having loved any one. 'It is not a heart that you have here,' she said, touching his breast with her finger; 'it is a second brain!' I thought for a long time that the same thing might be said of her; but it appears that an Englishman, lord Walpole—"

"The same who was lately in Paris?"

"Yes."

"She knew him, then, in her youth?"

"Not at all; she has fallen distractedly in love with him in her sixtieth year. He laughed at her; he went so far as to say to her, in a letter since become public, that he cared little at forty, to be the lover of a woman of sixty. She persists; it is asserted that she writes to him in the tenderest style. But the most curious part of the matter is, that the public do not laugh. Madame du Deffant is the fashion; Madame du Deffant is the patroness of the formers of public opinion; that is enough; she has the right to be an old fool, without any one venturing to laugh or to stare. Then, mark well, it is for an Englishman that she sighs; and the surest way, in these days, to be popular in France, is not to be French. All the men whom you see here, with the exception of two or three, are in love with the king of Prussia. How, then, could they blame the mistress of the house for being in love with a noble lord, a man of talent, and tolerably well versed in the ideas of the day? This last point, as you may well think, is the indispensable one. Out of infidelity, there is no salvation. The reason why they so cry up the king of Prussia, is not that he is an able writer,—for in regard to this they laugh slyly, indeed sometimes even loudly;—nor because of his liberal political ideas, from which it is well known that his subjects derive no benefit;—absolutely, the only reason is his infidelity. His advancement, they assert, is the progress of reason. What do they mean by that? Is it for infidelity that he fights? Does he impose upon his vanquished enemies the obligation to be infidels? No. But he is one himself; that is enough. All his enterprises must be proper; the French will be enchanted with all the harm which he may do them; and the only verses which Monsieur d'Alembert ever made in his life

were in his praise.* It is the most odious piece of folly ever shown by any people.

"Another of the passions for the English, is that of Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse. It is true that Sterne, her hero, is a grave churchman, to whom I do not suppose she says tender things; but she is infatuated with his book, and it will not be her fault if all our writers do not set to work to make *Sentimental journies.*

"The count de Buffon, whom I pointed out to you just now, beside her, is the type of the aristocratic writer. Few reputations are less disputed than his. It is asserted that Rousseau, who always runs into extremes, one day kissed the threshold of his cabinet. He has a right to be proud of his works; but his pride is frequently undignified; it somewhat resembles that of a parvenu who thinks too much of his title, or of a man lately become rich, and continually dreaming of his money. The moment he condescends, he easily becomes low,—almost gross. He is accused of lacking a due appreciation of the talents of his fellow authors. Two of them, Daubenton and Guéneau, are now talking to him. See how haughtily he holds his head, and how he plants himself between them, with his gold-buckled shoes.

"You heard Monsieur de La Caille. He is one of the first astronomers of the age; always calculating, always making discoveries, philosophizing but little, and working all the better for it. There is his colleague, Clairault, a little too much inclined to quit the heavens for earthly discussions; which is, I

* "Father and monarch,—valiant and wise,
He knows how to conquer, to reign and advise.
A hero he is, e'en when fallen he lies;
But risen, he puts forth his genius and ire,
And sees all Europe arise,
To combat, but more to admire."

suspect, the fault of his disciple, Bailly, also,—a great admirer of the ancient republics. Clairault is none the less a very great mathematician. Last year's comet, whose appearance he had predicted, contributed equally to make him renowned among the learned, and fashionable among the ladies. He is now talking to— But why does that lady scream? Ah! I understand. He must have opened his snuff-box—"

"Who?"

"M. de Lalande, whom I was about to point out to you. Spiders are his passion—"

"He tames them?"

"Not at all; he eats them. That box, which he calls his snuff-box, is full of them. He has just taken one out. See,—he pulls off the claws, and sucks them. He says nothing can be more juicy. He is a good-hearted man, but an incurable atheist.

"The group who were talking of taxes, is the party of political economists. There is young Necker, of whom I spoke to you the other day. There, too, is his friend Turgot, a wise thinker, but a great talker,—not so great, however, as the crabbed Marquis de Mirabeau, who would doubtless be here, if he were not in the Bastile, whither he was sent on account of his *Theory of Taxation*. There is Morellet, who, as you know, has just been liberated. He excels in setting forth clearly, the somewhat confused ideas of his companions in political economy. It is quite a new science. Its founders, to begin with Quesnay, are still very far from having fixed its foundations, or even from having determined its field. These gentlemen sometimes do me the honor to request some information from me in regard to the former manner of carrying on these affairs; they always come to the conclusion, sometimes with a little pomposity, but often with too much reason, that

there has never been so badly governed a country in the world.

"As for literary men, authors, properly speaking, all whom I have not yet mentioned to you, belong to their ranks, or wish to belong to them. There is young La Harpe, to whom two prizes in rhetoric have opened a literary career, and who is working at a tragedy, *Warwick*, which his friends commend highly. There is young Chamfort, renowned for his successes at college,—already a bold talker, much sought after, but little liked. Two others, less sought after, but much better liked, are now speaking to him. One is Corlardeau, still quite crushed by the failure of his *Caliste;* the other is Saurin, who has met with more than one failure, but who will soon retrieve these, it is said, by his *Spartacus*. There, at the corner of the mantel, stands Barthe, an original thinker, but a weak poet, to say nothing more; and there is Suard, one of those men who attain a certain reputation, without any one knowing well why or how; and there Saint Lambert, whom Madame du Deffant called 'cold, insipid, and false,' but who is in such high favor at Ferney, that he is well received everywhere. He is rich, moreover, and has taken to enacting the Mecænas, as you may perceive from his air. The man to whom he is speaking at this moment, is Chabanon, formerly a bigot, now an encyclopedist.

"The two who are talking at the other corner, are also two of our patrons of literature, the marquis, de Chastellux, and the duke de Nivernais; the marquis, amiable and unpretending, the duke, aspiring to authorship, writing a little upon all subjects, never beyond mediocrity, but always praised. He was a moment ago with president Hénault, talking of the history of France, now he is talking to Vanloo, the king's painter, talking, doubtless, of art; and what he says to them this even-

ing, he will write to-morrow, to be published the next day. The gentleman just coming up is the count d'Argental, the particular friend and confidant of Monsieur de Voltaire, the only man whom he is known to consult in regard to his works. That will explain to you sufficiently, I imagine, why he is so surrounded with respect and admiration. The confidant, the adviser, the oracle! He has no equal in Europe, some one remarked, save the pope's confessor.

"Then as for the abbés, you see there is no lack of them, all excelling in putting their livery to shame, some by their infidelity, some by their immorality, many by both at once. You have there the abbé de Voisenon, the great opera maker; there is the abbé Raynal, the Diderot of abbés. There are several more, the abbé de Saint-Non, the abbé d'Ardigny, and the abbé de Saint-Marcelin, so proud of his living, and so astonished that he was obliged to wait for it so long, as if the abbé de Bernis, who came here so often, had not just been made cardinal, and as if it were necessary after all, that an abbé should believe in God! The abbé d'Argenteuil, who is a believer, took it into his head to convert Diderot. He was laughed at, and we have never seen him here since.

"Among the Jansenists, in spite of what I said to you about them, we have some who exert themselves vigorously to become true believers. Did you hear those two gentlemen, who so honestly discussed the legend of Saint-Denis? Well, one of them is a man of no intellect; but the other is Monsieur de la Chalotais the attorney-general, and enemy of the Jesuits. Thus act and think the greater part of the prominent men among them. They resist the instructions of the Church, and put entire faith in the most miserable superstitions. The deacon Pâris, as you heard, has still more than one disciple. The police is perpetually on the look-out for these meetings

where kicks and blows, say the adepts, do no injury, so greatly does God delight in glorifying his saints. And when one of them is discovered, some man is sure to be found there whose position and intelligence would have precluded all supposition that he could participate in these follies.

"Yet it is among the Jansenists that we are to seek the few true Christians,—with two or three exceptions,—which the Church of Rome still numbers in France. In vain she casts them off; they do more for her than any others."

"In the opinion of the ignorant," said Rabaut. "But is their Catholicity really such? The Jesuits whom they proscribe are the only true consistent Catholics. It ought to be easy to make them confess this."

"Easy, you say?" resumed Gebelin. "I have tried it a hundred times; a hundred times have I convinced myself that we must not depend upon reason, even when we have to deal with the most reasonable of mankind. One might imagine that in all false and logically untenable positions, there must be a certain charm which induces people to persist in defending them. The mind sets to work to find explanations, distinctions, pretexts. It feels the pleasure of difficulties conquered, the pride of travelling in a path different from the common highways, it feels—how do I know what? People do not explain to themselves clearly what they feel, but they persist, and their opponent has his trouble for his pains. Add to that, in these questions the immense stride which would have to be made, if they concluded to carry out their consistency. The Gallican who should confess himself no Catholic, would have nothing more to do than to declare himself a Protestant. He might retain some of the Romish doctrines; but he would retain them as we do ours, claiming the right to reject them, as soon as he considers them as contrary to Scrip-

ture and to his own conscience. In fact there are few Catholics who do not use this right. It is already a proof that it has been employed, and largely, too, when a man calls himself a Gallican, or a Jansenist; but to acknowledge and proclaim it, is quite another thing. This terrifies him, he recoils, he looks back, he slumbers once more. Would you like me to make another trial?"

"On Monsieur de la Chalotais?"

"No; on Monsieur de Faillet, whom I see yonder, one of the most pious and sincere—in short, the best Catholic among all the frequenters of the house. You shall see with what an air of pity he presses my hand, and how his look seems to say, 'Poor creatures! lost, damned!'"

"Very charitable, certainly; but how, then, can he remain under the same roof with some of these other gentlemen? Does he believe that we are more lost or damned than a d'Alembert or a d'Holbach?"

"In reality, no; but as soon as these things are brought up, he cannot help thinking a great deal more of us than of them. They are lost sheep, about which no one any longer troubles himself; but we are only straying sheep. Monsieur de Faillet and his companions treat us on a small scale, just as the government on a large. If we are Christians otherwise than the king wills, we must go to the galleys; we must cease to be Christians at all, if we would be left in peace. To be sure, this is but one of the forms of the universal want of order which prevails. The narrower the chasm separating two parties, the greater is the antipathy, the more violent the warfare. 'But he is a Jansenist!' said Louis XV. one day. 'He, sire! It is not even certain that he believes in God.' 'So much the better!' said the king; and he grants to the infidel the favor which he would have refused to the Jansenist. And thus proceed

these same Jansenists as soon as *we* come under discussion. We are the horror of the more violent of them; and the charitable ones pity us. Stay.—see how our friend has just pressed Grimm's hand. They almost embraced each other. They whisper together. But he is coming this way."

LIV.

HUGUENOT AND JANSENIST.

"Ah! good evening, Monsieur de Faillet!" said Gebelin, as if he had just perceived him.

"Good evening, my dear sir! good evening!"

Rabaut could not help smiling. The tone, the grasp of the hand, the look, everything, in short, was just what Gebelin had predicted.

"What was Monsieur Grimm saying to you just now?" asked Gebelin. "He had a most triumphant air."

"As he always has, the wretch, when he thinks he can enrage me."

"Some impiety, doubtless?"

"A jest. He is really very witty."

"How well you seem to bear it!"

"What can I do?"

"You would not endure a grave Protestant discussion so quietly."

"Monsieur!"

"Is it perhaps because you are more afraid of the latter?"

"Afraid!"

"Or because you concern yourself less about God than about the mass?"

"I concern myself both about God and about the mass, Monsieur."

"Very good."

"And I shall prove it, I hope, if I publish my works. It will be seen whether—"

"Oh! pen in hand, it is another matter. A man has time to arrange his attacks and defences; to repress expressions which may be too strong, and sharpen those which are not strong enough. I was alluding to your ordinary, instinctive ideas."

"God alone is judge of those."

"God alone!—and the Church?"

"The Church cannot have the right to judge of that about which she knows nothing."

"That is a speech which would sound very badly, I fancy, to certain ears, in certain countries. Your Church has never admitted that she is not to be the judge of the most secret feelings. This opinion alone puts you in opposition to her."

"At all events, you are not the person to reproach me for it."

"Not I; I only pray that God will cause you to make rapid progress in this doctrine. But you have already gone far enough for us to be surprised, when you seem to fancy yourself so widely removed from us."

"That, in fact, is the point," added Rabaut. "Some details have just been given me, Monsieur, in regard to the religious party to which you belong; and I could not, in conscience, help asking myself why you do not belong to ours. For why is it that we are not Catholics? Our reasons may be easily reduced to three. That, in the first place, which I may term hierarchical; we do not believe in the authority of the pope. Secondly, that, which I shall term doctrinal; we will have no rule of faith but Scripture. And finally, that which may be

called moral; namely, we leave to each one the responsibility of his own belief, as well as his own actions. These principles are yours."

"Ours!" cried Monsieur de Faillet.

"Yours. Be kind enough to listen to me."

"Suppose we take our seats?" said Gebelin.

They went on into a small apartment, and sat down.

"To resume our subject," said the minister. "My three points are, in fact, closely connected. It would be useless to develop them separately.

"With us, as I said, every man is responsible for his belief. Among you, what do I see? From Pascal to Quesnel, from Arnauld to your leaders of the present day, an endless tissue of discussions and struggles. Would this, I ask, be the spectacle presented by men really convinced that the Church alone is to be depended upon; that what she gives must be accepted, what she condemns be rejected, what she approves be approved, and what she condemns be condemned? Either you resist,—and this I do not admit,—for the mere pleasure of resisting, or you feel yourselves, in the presence of God, responsible for your belief.

"Still further. Not only do you not appear to believe that the responsibility of the Church sufficiently shelters your own, but, the case failing, you assume the position of a formal resistance. It is not for me now to examine the points upon which you have been condemned; I confine myself to remarking, that there are and have been numerous decisions to which you have never entirely submitted yourselves. When the archbishop of Paris, your legitimate pastor, refuses you the sacraments,—when the pope supports the archbishop,—when the whole body of bishops, with one or two exceptions, is unanimous against you,—it is impossible for me to comprehend in

what sense you are still the children of the Church which pretends to speak in the name of God, and which—this you yourselves teach, when it is necessary to oppose its word to us—cannot err."

"We do not deny its authority," said Monsieur de Faillet; "we confine ourselves to distinguishing between the cases in which the exercise of this authority is natural and legitimate, and those in which it would be an usurpation."

"There it is!—But Monsieur, tell me, for Heaven's sake, what difference do you see between us, who deny it *in toto*, and yourselves, who deny it when it seems good to you?"

"What! would it be the same thing, do you think, to deny the king's authority, and to resist it, in a case of flagrant oppression?"

"Your comparison is not and cannot be just. The greatest defenders of royal authority, have never claimed for it the privilege of infallibility. They grant you,—and how could they do otherwise,—that a king may make bad laws, give bad orders, and have absurd ideas. Could you say the same of the pope, without giving him up entirely?"

"The pope is not the Church."

"Just as you like; but pray what is the Church without him? As soon as his voice is not infallibly that of the Church, where must you go? Where is the Church? When, how, through whom does she speak? Every one, then, may make her speak; each one may assert with equal authority, what she ought to be understood to teach, or not to teach. We also admit the authority of the Church in this manner, with this difference, that instead of supporting ourselves upon what she teaches at the present time, we rest upon what she taught in the first or second century. True, we do not acknowledge that any one has the right or power to tell us infallibly what

she then taught; but you, if you do not acknowledge the pope to be the person to tell you infallibly what she teaches now, whom *can* you acknowledge? There we see you, like ourselves, practising the right of individual judgment, we see you laboring, each one for himself, and on his own responsibility, to form for himself, with the triple aid of the Scriptures, conscience, and history, the religion which he is to profess. I repeat it, unless you ackowledge a pope,—an infallible pope,—you may say as much as you will, that you do not resemble us; you have in reality the same principles as ourselves."

"What matters it, provided that we, after all, are in the right, while you remain in the wrong?

"What matters it? Why Monsieur, that is almost an abjuration. You could not possibly have confirmed more clearly all that I just said. What matters it? you ask. What matters it how the truth be reached, if it be but reached? Why the Church in such a system is no longer anything more than an assistance to be resorted to, when one feels the need of it, and consequently to be laid aside, as soon as one feels it possible to do without her. She is an authority to be consulted; not *the authority*, in the absolute, complete, divine sense which all Catholic authors have given to this word. Once more, the consideration of results has nothing to do here. As soon as you assume to yourself the right not to submit in everything, but to examine, to determine yourself whether or not you will submit, you have deserted the Catholic principle. It is all one whether you reject the bull *Unigenitus*, or the Council of Trent."

"Come! come! It is easy to see that you are ignorant how we look upon these matters."

"Yes, thank God, I am ignorant of the sophisms in which you are forced to take refuge, in order still to appear Catholic,

while retaining certain rights of conscience and reason. To appear Catholic! Do you at least succeed in this? If you do not deceive God, do you at least deceive men? Yes; those who choose to to be deceived; those whose interest it is to be so; those who would fear the sensation caused by an honest, distinct explanation. But do you deceive those, who like us, have no interest in being cautious; those, who like the Jesuits, wish that you should be Catholics in deed, and not in word only? Do you expect to deceive them? When they summon you to submit,—armed with the bull *Unigenitus*,—and you do not submit, what room is there for hesitation? It must be *yes*, or *no*. A bull, you say, is not a decree of the council. But, so far I know, you have no permanent council."

"I beg your pardon," said Monsieur de Faillet; "it is not assembled, but it exists. When the body of bishops have unanimously admitted a decree of the sovereign pontiff, then this decree has the force of a law."

"Very good; you could not better have anticipated just what I was about to say. A bull, according to you, has the force of a law, only after having been received by the whole body of bishops; and the bull *Unigenitus*, you were undoubtedly about to add, has not been so received. Some bishops have objected, and still object. Yes, but how many? Does it depend then upon a few, upon three or four, upon one, to prevent a decree of the pope, received by all the others, from being obligatory to the Church? In that case, what you say of the bulls might also be said of almost all the decrees of the councils. Even at Trent, where they had so many reasons for endeavoring to appear united, there was scarcely one made which was not opposed by some of the bishops, frequently by a number of them, a very great number, a quarter, a third of the voters. Will you reject those? I have no ob-

jections; but in that case, what is it to be a Catholic? What right have you to keep that name?

"All this, you see, leads us back to the point where I commenced. The true and only Catholics are the Jesuits. One day when the papal Nuncio visited Chancellor d'Aguesseau, at Fresnes, he said: 'So it is here that weapons are forged against Rome?' 'No,' replied the Chancellor, 'not weapons, only shields.' And the whole dispute is there. What the Jansenists call shields, the Ultramontanists call weapons; and the Ultramontanists are right. At the Council of Trent, when Lainez, the general of the Jesuits, undertook to set forth his theory of the infallibility of the pope, he forced every one to admit that he and his brethren alone, were, if not in the right, at least the only honest and complete applicants of the principle of authority. He demonstrated, that in refusing infallibility to the pope, it was also refused to the Church; that if the liberty of disobedience or even of examination be taken in regard to one point, there is no reason why it may not be done in regard to all others; that there is, in short, between a Protestant and a Jesuit, only a factitious, slippery, lying medium. Ah! if all the Jesuits had the frankness of Lainez! If they, like him, refused the name of Catholics to all those who were really not such! What amazement, what a disbanding there would be in your Church! But no, they are as accommodating to those who keep their rebellion within their hearts, as they are bitter against those who raise the standard of rebellion. Who ever says that he is a Catholic, is allowed by them to imagine that he is one."

"Why not?" interrupted Monsieur de Faillet. "What is the use of disquieting consciences actuated by good intentions? I did not expect to find myself the apologist of the Jesuits, and yet—"

"Listen. One of two things is true; either it is impossible to be saved without being a Catholic, or it is not. If it is not, let those be left in peace who have the courage and frankness to confess that they are not Catholics. If it is, then it is cruel to leave in their error those who imagine that they are, while they are only half Catholics, or not Catholics at all, which is, in fact, the same thing."

"That is singularly absolute."

"Is it my fault? All questions in your Church necessarily assume this character. The best arm to employ against you,—I had almost said the best punishment to inflict upon you,—is to pin you down to your own principles, and forbid you to deviate from them. Transgress against them, and you are ours; hold to them, and you find yourselves side by side with these men whom you profess to combat and abhor.

"Permit me to say, then, that it is no small encouragement to us, in our struggle against Catholicism, to see it execrated, under the name of Jesuitism, by so great a number of its children. On this point we agree perfectly with the Jesuits. We esteem them right, perfectly right, in declaring themselves to be the only true Catholics,—the only ones truly consistent in the application of Catholic principles,—the only inheritors, in virtue of their fidelity, of the divine promises which you assert to have been made to your Church. They can prove that in condemning them, you condemn her; that in striking them, you strike her. Condemn, strike. We shall not hinder you. But remember that in striking them, you strike yourselves at the same time."

LV.

EXPECTATION.

Monsieur de Faillet affected not to listen. He had of course felt, though vaguely, during his struggles with the Ultra-montanists, all that Rabaut had just said. Like all the Catholic enemies of the Jesuits, he had been obliged to shut his eyes, in order not to see where, in reality, fell the greater portion of the blows directed against them. Like all Catholics who were friends of an enlightened faith, of a wise freedom, and of a serious and elevated piety, it was only by shutting his eyes that he had been able, without falsehood, to continue to call himself a Catholic.

But it is not easy unhesitatingly to give up an illusion without which it would no longer be possible to avoid laying down one's weapons. The heart is marvellously skilful in preventing the head from comprehending the real state of the question. It has been said that the head is frequently the dupe of the heart. More frequently, we may add, it is, if not its dupe, its slave.

The discussion could have no possible result. It was happily interrupted.

"Gentlemen," said a valet, who was going from one apartment to another, calling together the scattered guests, "it will be commenced in a moment. Madame la marquise takes the liberty of recommending attention and silence."

"What can it be?" said Rabaut.

But the valet had already passed on to another group of talkers.

"Something is to be read, probably," said Gebelin.

"Why should such a recommendation be given? Do they talk while reading is going on?"

"That is as it happens. If the reader belongs to the set, you might hear a pin drop; if not, they do not trouble themselves much to keep silence. Some days ago, a young author, one Bernardin, I think, read us the first part of some little romance. It was really very good; a little effeminate, but charmingly natural. The whole thing, moreover, was quite novel; for the scene was laid in the Isle of France, where our authors have never yet thought of going in search of inspiration.* But all our company here pronounced this simplicity and nature too simple, too creole, too *natural*, in short. 'Let the horses be put to my carriage!' said Monsieur de Buffon, in his most grandiose tone; and the poor author, a few moments after, stopped reading. But come, gentlemen; everybody is already in the saloon."

The saloon presented rather a singular appearance. "What is to be done?" asked some. "We do not know," replied others. Evidently something was plotting.

LVI.

A YOUNG ORATOR.

And great indeed, in all respects, was the surprise which awaited the company this evening.

The hôtel de Rambouillet, although for fifty years it had ceased to exist, had left a profound impression. Its pretensions were laughed at,—and twenty houses now set up just as many.

Madame du Deffant especially continued it as well as she

* Bernardin de St. Pierre's "Paul and Virginia" is evidently alluded to. Tr.

could. She hastened to attempt everything which occurred to her, in order to make the succession more direct, and the resemblance greater.

One day, as she enumerated on her fingers all the reputations which had dawned beneath her roof, she remembered that no preacher had yet received in her house that baptism of fame with which Bossuet and a few others had been gratified in the old saloon of Rambouillet.

This idea tormented her. *Devotion*,—for, as we have seen, she occasionally had a slight inclination in that direction,—*devotion* joined its voice to that of vanity. After having patronized so many infidels, it would be a sort of expiation to patronize a believer, or at least a man who bore the dress and aspect of a believer.

But where was such a man to be found? He must be, at the same time, youthful enough to admit of her having the honor to form and direct him, and old enough, and particularly well enough endowed, to enable the public to take him up immediately.

"I have found him!" said the constant Pont-de-Veyle, at length. "He is a young man from Venaissin,—the son of a shoemaker. *Ne sutor ultra crepidam*, you will say. But no. I think he is the very man to disprove the proverb. Quite newly arrived in Paris, he was asked, the other day, what he came here for? 'To look for my hat,' was his reply. They say the cardinal de Rohan laughed very heartily. He called him his colleague in the blade. Let us water the plant, and—"

"How old is he?"

"Sixteen or seventeen."

"Why! he is a mere child!"

"You would take him for twenty. Besides, it was just Bos-

suet's age when he made his appearance at the hôtel de Rambouillet."

"Yes; but Bossuet—Bossuet—was Bossuet."

"Bossuet himself at that age, certainly had not greater facility and confidence than this young man."

"He had more faith, probably—"

"That is not my business!"

"Profane man!"

"Bigot!"

"Hush! His name is?—"

"Maury."

"Maury.—The abbé Maury."

"But he is not yet abbé!"

"So I should suppose. I am trying how it would sound. The abbé Maury.—Cardinal Maury.—Oh yes; the name does very well. Decidedly he is the man to take up. We will do so. We must make him extemporize a sermon, shall we not?"

"A sermon! You would—"

"Why not? You know very well that Bossuet made his début in that way."

"Yes; but—"

"But what?"

"A sermon before these gentlemen? Before d'Holbach? Before Diderot, perhaps?"

"Without counting you."

"Yes, without counting me. An edifying audience, on my honor!"

"It will show whether the orator is a man of talent."

"I understand. If he knows how to play his part as a Christian without interfering with those who are not so, we will patronize him; if he thinks himself obliged to thunder

away at the infidels, we will say to him: 'Go in peace, my dear. Become a village curé, and God be with you!' That is the thing, is it not?"

"Exactly."

The next day, a new guest made his appearance in the saloon. This young man, with his lofty brow and fearless eyes, had in two hours become familiar with all the great lords and authors whom he found there. Whence did he come? No one from his aspect, would have imagined for an instant. Everything about him indicated at the same time the man of the people and the man of the world, the plebeian and the aristocrat, that happy mixture by which high and low are so easily attracted,—the low, because they are easily imposed upon by all greatness, and the high, because they are small in the presence of that energetic *aplomb*, which is now so rarely met with save among the people. This unknown youth was he, who for the next twenty years was to be witty in the pulpit, and sceptical in the saloons; he who was to pass his youth at the feet of Voltaire, and his old age at the feet of Napoleon; not, it is true, without having displayed during the perils of the revolution, more than one flash of real courage and real eloquence. It was Siffrein Maury, the future Cardinal Maury.

LVII.

MAURY'S TEXT.

He had received with joy and eagerness, the proposal of this trial, which might raise him at once to a higher position than he could have attained by six years of persevering efforts. No fear, not the slightest agitation rendered the prospect alarming.

"So you are not afraid of coming to a stand still?" his protectress inquired. "Bah! Madame, how is it possible for any one to do that?"

The whole age was in this reply. To know everything, to be able to talk about everything, had been for the last forty years the wish, the aim, the folly or the glory,—as you may decide,—of this society, of which he was to be one of the latest, but also one of the most thorough representatives.

At length an evening had been decided upon, and this was the evening.

Gebelin and Rabaut could not for a long time understand what was about to take place. The initiated continued to smile without replying. We may be permitted to suppose that discretion was not the only motive of their silence. At the hôtel de Rambouillet, in 1644, a sermon seemed only strange; at Madame du Deffant's, in 1760, a sermon was ridiculous. Few people wished to have anything to do with it.

At length, the aspect of the assembled guests denoted that the matter was no longer a secret to any one. Some laughed, some shrugged their shoulders. Some few,—the most sincere believers, and the most downright infidels, took their departure.

Great was the embarrassment of many upon being requested to name a text, in order that the orator might draw one at hazard from among the number given. The holy Scriptures at this epoch were but little known save by two classes of persons; the followers of Jansenius, who read them for their own edification, and also a little for the pleasure of disobeying the pope; and the followers of Voltaire, who studied them in order to laugh at them. "Is it not necessary," he said once, "to know the *case* of our adversaries?" Half-way infi-

dels, worldly people, *well-bred people* in general, had nothing to do with them, and it might have been said of the holy books, as Voltaire said of Pompignon's hymns:

"Sacred they are, since they are touched by none."

Accordingly, throughout the saloon might be heard in a half whisper: "A text, if you please." "A text!" And all the superfluous verses with which some might be acquainted, they generously bestowed upon their neighbors. "But is this correct?" asked some. "Yes,—nearly so." And from these reminiscences resulted supposed verses which would have called forth the horror of Sacy, or Martin, ancient or modern, Romanist or Protestant translators. Others, in the belief that they were quoting the Bible, boldly wrote down some of the sayings of the theophilanthropy of the day. "Christ was the martyr of liberty." "Hell is the heart of the wicked." "God wills the happiness of all." "But, Monsieur," said Rabaut to one of his neighbors, who had just written down these last words, "that is not in the Bible." "It is not in the Bible? Ah!—Well, so much the worse for the Bible." And he threw his verse into the hat of Monsieur de Pont-de-Veyle, who was occupied in collecting the texts.

LVIII.

THE SERMON.

In the meantime the orator had made his appearance. The near approach of the moment had at length awakened in him a certain degree of emotion. It is certainly a great thing not to come to a stand still; but there are plenty of people who avoid this, and are still very prosing. Could he calculate upon

having a text which would not condemn him to be prosing, in spite of all his talent and assurance? And suppose the subject should be too decidedly Christian for him reasonably to indulge in *philosophizing* upon it? And suppose—but his uncertainty was not of long duration. He plunged his hand into the hat. A profound silence reigned.

"And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory?"*

Such were the words traced upon the paper which he had drawn from the hat. But he had perceived at a glance, all that there was embarrassing in the *why* at the close. Humility! He cared no more to preach it than the audience to hear it. Accordingly he read the first line only:—"What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" This was still humility, but humility in a form which which would allow him to say but little about it.

And in fact, he said but a few words in regard to it, in his exordium; these words moreover being merely in order to conceal his turning aside from the subject. "We owe all to God. We participate, through our faculties, in his nature, his intelligence, and all his perfections. Thence the prodigies of all kinds accomplished by human nature, in the sciences, the arts, in all the paths which Providence has opened to us." This was the style of his commencement; an able introduction to a magnificent picture of the grandeur of human intelligence.

Viewed in this light, there was no subject in the world which could have been more suited to the taste of the age, and especially of the audience which Maury had before him. The eighteenth century doubtless thought much, accomplished much, and made many discoveries; but never was there a cen-

* 1 Cor. iv. 7.

tury which more *naïvely* expressed its admiration for its own thoughts and deeds. It sometimes even admitted this to be the case. "It seems to me," wrote Grimm,* "that the eighteenth century surpasses all others in the praises which it has bestowed upon itself." Ours, we must in justice admit, is more modest. Individual pride is the same; public pride, if we may so entitle it, has imposed upon itself tolerably wise limits. The more progress we make, and the more rapidly we make it, the more we feel what folly it would be to assert that we have reached the utmost limits of discovery. At that time this was believed to be the case. Superior men, inferior men, commonplace men, all took part in the long hymn sung to the glory of man; all joined in the immense circle which noisily danced around his pedestal.

Yet the youthful voice which on this day joined the deafening concert, did not lack grandeur and elevation. The only fault of this sermon, was its being called a sermon at all. The picture of the age's progress had never been delineated with greater splendor and power. The surprise of all was great, their attention was profound. In this rapid review of all that had been accomplished in the last hundred years, there was not a word, not a stroke which did not win over to the orator some one of his audience. By turns, artist, savant, author, and philosopher, he spoke to each his own language; to each one, like a sovereign scattering wide his honors, he knew how to deal forth, as he went on, whatever he thought would best suit his tastes, and his pride. He named no one, indicated no one; and yet all eyes were continually turned from him to those whose labors he was exalting. He allowed each one time to taste well his glory; and he made them all feel the

* *Correspondence.* 25th January, 1757.

honor of entering in some degree into the splendor of the whole.

"What labors!" he cried. "What triumphs! What an immense extension of the field of our forefathers! In other days, hardly at the close of a long life, could one perceive any considerable change and progress; now, from year to year, almost from month to month, all boundaries are changed, all treasures increased. The earth has no longer any abysses, the heavens have no depths, into which the human eye does not penetrate. Hope no more, ye wandering stars, to terrify us by your caprices! Your path is marked out. We shall expect your return in future, as we expect that of the most docile of your shining companions. Four elements were bequeathed to us; we shall bequeath forty to our successors. Bring us from the ends of the earth some plant which no human eye has yet seen; we shall recognize it; we shall tell you its place in the vegetable world. Go and seek in the deepest mines, a shapeless rock, a broken bone. We will make this stone relate to you the history of the globe; we will restore life to it, and with it resuscitate before your eyes all the generations of living creatures which have preceded us in the universe."

Thus spoke the young and brilliant sophist; thus, on the altar of the eighteenth century, he burned the incense of his glowing admiration.

He ceased. His discourse had been nearly an hour in length. He had caressed the pride, and sung the triumphs of all. Could he doubt of his success? We may add that he had taken good care not to spoil the admirable effect of this picture by a Christian peroration. Like those flatterers who conclude their eulogiums by throwing themselves on their knees and thanking God for the virtues of their idol, he had

cried: "O God, behold our age has received all this from you! You have willed that it should tower above the other ages, like the cedar of Lebanon above the surrounding groves, like the lily above the lowly plants which it surpasses in its appearance, and embalms with its fragrance! Disappear then, henceforth disappear ye clouds! The reign of intelligence is here. Humanity has once more taken wing. Let it go onward! And the Infinite itself shall bend down beneath its triumphant progress!"

Great, accordingly, was the enthusiasm; and all, even Buffon himself, pressing through the throng, went to congratulate the young orator.

LIX.

"WHAT SHALL I CRY?"

The next day but one, at the same hour, in a remote chamber in the archiepiscopal palace, another orator was practicing this same calling of eloquence, the noblest or the most contemptible of callings.

This orator was not just commencing his career. His début had been made forty years before, and yet he murmured: "Never, never have I felt as I now feel! To-morrow, —to-morrow,—at Saint-Sulpice. *All Paris will be there*, they tell me. All Paris, in fact,—all *their* Paris,—this nameless mixture of false gold, infidelity and vice. Paris,—*all Paris*. And what shall I say to these people! To-morrow,—and nothing yet ready—nothing that is worth anything."

And he pushed away several roughly-written papers, rumpled, torn, and covered with erasures and ink.

"But why," he resumed, "why have I taken it into my head to write? I was never made to write down these things,

line by line. And shall I at sixty try to learn? But come, come,—I have lost two days. This work must at least profit me a little."

He took the leaves again.

"This exordium,—let me see.

"'At the sight of an audience so new to me, the astonishment aroused within me is only equalled by the fear of being too far below what is apparently expected from me.' *Me—me*,—three times *me* in one sentence. Would that happen if I were talking? But let me go on,—I will correct afterwards.

"'What can I do, in commencing, but solicit your indulgence? Grant it to me—' Good,—another *me*. 'Grant it to me, my dear brethren. I am but a poor missionary. What right have I to present myself before you. Pardon—'

"Falsehood!" cried Bridaine; and this time the papers were flung to the further side of the table. "Falsehood and cowardice! And I—I could write that! I could—O God, my pen was a lying pen—like so many others! My lips could not have spoken thus,—my heart still less. And yet I wrote it,—I wrote it; and even if I should burn these leaves, I should none the less have written them. And I took hours to do it! And I only saw a few words to be corrected.—What, what could I have been about? What was I thinking of? To excuse myself! To ask pardon! '*What right have I to present myself before you!* What right?—You shall read it upon my brow, infidels!"

But suddenly a cloud seemed to pass over this brow, whereon he felt was written his right to be the minister of God. He bowed his head; he was silent. His eyes seemed endeavoring to fathom an abyss. This abyss was his own heart.

"Yes," he resumed, "yes; I see it all. And God saw it before I did. Not alone my pen was guilty. Yes. The poor

missionary was afraid. He imagined himself appearing with his harsh voice, his clumsy gestures, and his rustic face, before those great lords and beautiful ladies. He belittled himself, oh God,—he forgot that in your sight your ministry is always exalted! Yes, I was afraid. I thought of myself,—of—pardon me, oh God!—of my reputation—of the disenchantment which might be felt upon hearing me. Misery! oh misery! Is it quite certain that I am not thinking of the same things now?"

He remained for a long time in this attitude of mournful self-examination,—his hands hanging motionless beside him, and his eyes fixed on the same spot. The passing hours were tolled solemnly and slowly from the high towers of Notre-Dame, but no sound reached his ear.

At length midnight sounded. At the first stroke Bridaine arose, as if this solemn hour had resounded differently from the others, through the long corridors of the palace. He listened; he counted—

"Midnight!" he murmured. "It is no longer to-morrow; it is to-day. A few hours more, and I shall see them,—there, crowded around my pulpit. O God!—oh God! once more, what shall I say to them?"

He fell back into his seat. But a book lay before him, upon the table from which he had swept his manuscript. Upon the worn parchment of its rough cover, might be read:

"*Vox dicentis: Clama. Et dixi: quid clamabo?*

"*Clama; ne cesses. Quasi tuba exalta vocem tuam; et annuntia populo meo scelera eorum, et domui Jacob peccata eorum.*"*

* "And the voice said: Cry. And he said, What shall I cry?

"Cry aloud, spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins."

Isaiah xl. and lviii.

He himself had traced these words. He liked to have them before his eyes. They were his credentials as an ambassador of God; his device as a champion of the faith, and in his moments of discouragement, his strength and consolation.

He took the book, and without opening it, held it a long time upon his knees, gazing at the terrible, but re-assuring inscription.

"*Quid clamabo?*" he murmured. "Yes. What shall I cry? Alas! Isaiah asked this before I did, Moses before Isaiah. They also trembled before they went to work. Come,—courage! Why should he who supported them, abandon me? Come. Where is my text? Let me read it over once more. —And God will do the rest."

He opened his book,—it was the Bible,—and soon placed his finger on the verse which we saw him select at the house of Gebelin, from the leaf saved from the fire.

Then, with more assurance,—he said:

"Quid clamabo?" he repeated. "This is what I shall cry! 'For God hath fixed a day when he shall judge the world.' He has *fixed* a day. Yes. That is what I shall say. *Fixed! fixed!* There is—when? No matter! There is, in the course of ages, a day fixed, irrevocably fixed, when ye shall appear before God. There is a day when all your iniquities shall appear before you, inscribed—forever inscribed upon the flaming book of justice,—upon the book— But no,—they are familiar with these terrifying ideas. I wish to show them that this book is their own heart; that it is *there* they shall one day perceive, as if by a lightning flash, all that they now accumulate there, of falsehood and vice. God will judge; yes, but not as man judges. He will have but to restore to the wicked that internal consciousness which they have lost, and each one shall instantly become his own accuser, judge, and executioner.

Fixed! fixed! Do you see it, as it draws nigh, still surrounded with obscurity, but certain, inexorable, that day when you shall be plunged into the abyss? Do you see it? Oh God! Do I, myself, look closely enough at it? Do I feel vividly enough the terror with which I wish to inspire others? Have I assured myself sufficiently that you will weigh in your eternal balance my hesitations, my weaknesses, all!—even to the words which just escaped me!"

LX.

A PROPHETIC VISION.

He was once more silent. He let his clasped hands fall upon the book; his brow rested upon his hands; his eyes were closed. Soon, beneath the double weight of fatigue and meditation, he fell asleep, but with that half slumber in which the soul seems to inherit the activity of the body.

And then he felt himself, as it were, transported into another world, in which revived in other forms all the false virtues, all the vices, all the crimes, against which he had inveighed in this. He recognized them from his own delineation of them. It was no longer the earth; it was not hell. These spectres were neither sad nor joyful. They advanced silently, and their gaze seemed fastened upon some object. Some brandished a hatchet, others affected to display their hands without weapons, while a concealed poignard might be detected in the graceful folds of their garments.

And these spectres came and went, like men full of business.

And Bridaine went on, on with them, like one who had something to see.

And with the sound of the footsteps of these demons, seemed to mingle a psalmody from on high.

"Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire.

"He hath smitten the kings, because the kings transgressed.

"He hath smitten the nations, because the nations transgressed.

"Sow, sow the wind, and ye shall reap the whirlwind.

"Sow, sow death, and ye shall reap death.

"He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire—"

But the spectres listened not. They went on, on unceasingly.

And those who bore the axes, brandished them more boldly.

And those who had the daggers, drew them forth.

And in the midst of the mist into which they rushed confusedly, might be perceived upon a pedestal, a tall and majestic statue.

Above its head, in starry letters, might be read,

LIBERTY;

And upon the rock which supported it,

GOD;

Then they threw themselves upon their knees before it, and all cried out,

"Help us, Liberty! help us! Descend! descend!"

But she remained motionless.

And then they dashed themselves against the pedestal, and all cried, "Overthrow! Overthrow!"

But the pedestal was not shaken.

Then the axes were raised, and all cried, "Break! Break!"

But the axes were blunted by the hard granite; the name of God was illuminated by all the sparks of fire elicited by the iron from the unconquerable stone.

"Brethren," said one of the laborers, "what shall we do?"

"What shall we do?" they repeated.

"Brethren," he resumed, "let us begin by erecting another pedestal."

Then they set to work. Some brought materials, others builded, others set up around the statue the scaffolding by means of which they were to take it away.

And from the top of the scaffolding they cried, "Is all ready?"

And those below replied, "No." Then they ran and overthrew another throne, another altar. And they brought the fragments, and heaped them up together, so at length they raised the heap to the height of the old pedestal.

And upon the sides of the new one, to which had been given the false appearance of granite, they wrote,

HONOUR, PATRIOTISM, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY.

Then, amidst the acclamations of the crowd, the statue was taken down; they carried it, with songs, to its new pedestal; they set it up—

But immediately, with a terrible crash, it tottered,—crumbled,—fell. And its fragments mingled with those of which the spectres had endeavored to make it a throne.

And to the commotion of the tottering earth, replied a sighing from above:

"Woe, woe to those who trust in man!

"They wished to set up Liberty upon the virtues and triumphs of man. She is fallen, and great was her fall.

"Woe, woe to those who trust in man!"

Then there was a great division among those who had accomplished this work.

Some cast away their axes and clung to the granite which they had striven to overthrow. They dashed their repentant brows against it; they kissed it devoutly.

An inner voice told these, that henceforward Liberty should have her pedestal in their hearts.

The others had shut their eyes that they might not see; and at the first sound of the voice from on high, they had stopped their ears.

These were condemned to an endless search.

And so they sought,—sought unceasingly. Their axes stirred up the fragments. Those of Liberty were shattered like the rest beneath their mad blows.

And the mist which surrounded them became thicker and thicker.

And they were heard to curse one another.

And the clash of arms followed the sound of the maledictions, and the clash of arms was succeeded by tears and cries, and the cries were followed by a fearful silence.

Then might be perceived, in the midst of the obscurity, a statue, seated. Its feet were bathed in blood. Its right hand was filled with chains; its left held an iron sceptre.

This was Despotism, seated in peace upon the ruins of all rights and all truths.

She seemed sometimes to wear a royal crown, sometimes the cap of liberty, Her tattered garments changed to purple robes, her purple robes to tattered garments. The sceptre alone remained always of iron.

And a plaintive, far-heard voice, like the voice of many nations, arose from time to time: "How long, oh Lord! how long!"

And the answer too, was heard immediately:

"Repent ye, and be converted, and your souls shall find peace."

And the multitude hearkened not; and Bridaine repeated after the voice from on high: "Repent ye and be converted."

And the voice said: "They have not hearkened to the voice of God, will they hearken to the voice of man?"

And Bridaine again cried aloud: "Repent ye and be converted!"

But a terrible confusion was now all that could be seen. All things changed their names. Good was called evil; evil was called good. Truth entered into the service of falsehood; falsehood into that of truth. All spoke, but none listened. All touched, but no longer perceived each other.

And all was whirling round in an infernal tempest; while Bridaine, terrified, clung to the book upon which he had supported his head.

And when at length he re-opened his eyes, he saw by the rays of his half extinguished lamp, only these words of the scorched leaf:

"God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world."

LXI.

FASHIONABLE RELIGION.

Whilst the preacher watched and prayed in the archiepiscopal palace, others were watching at Saint-Sulpice; but these latter did not pray.

Many people of rank had sent their valets to pass the night in the church. This was the only way of securing places upon grand occasions; besides, it was the fashion, and that of itself would have been sufficient reason.

Fashion, which cannot fail to have its effect upon religious matters, has so much the more influence at those periods when there is least piety, and when religion is most an affair of form and decency.

This observation, which is just in itself, has not always been well applied.

It is agreed, for instance, to attribute to fashion all the piety or at least the external appearance of piety which existed in the last years of Louis XIV.'s reign.

That he may have encouraged, and if needs be, commanded, these manifestations, is true. We know very well what may be the influence of a king, more especially a king like him, whom fashion itself, the most independent of powers, was in the habit of obeying.

But we go too far in attributing to him alone all the devotion and devotees to be found in the latter part of his reign. Beneath these manifestations ordered by him, there existed besides a large amount,—we will not say of real piety,—but of pious habits,—of pious instincts which were easily aroused. We may be sure that all these people who, to please Louis XIV. performed their Easter devotions in public,—would have performed them,—in secret, perhaps, and in a somewhat confused style,—to please their wives, their children, and themselves.

We must not forget, moreover, that these externals had long outlived the old king. After all we know of the infidelity and immorality of the last century, we have some trouble in not fancying the churches empty, the priests derided, and the ceremonies of public worship turned into ridicule. This would be an entire mistake. People had ceased, it is true, to affect religious sentiments, for they would only have met with sarcasms; but external duties were generally

fulfilled as scrupulously as ever. Only the professed infidels, —and these were not numerous,—had entirely broken with the Church. Even among them there were but few who refused a reconciliation with her on their death-beds; many did not even wait until then. In the evening they laughed at the mass; in the morning they attended it. They talked impiety with immoral abbés, and theology with sincere priests. The sins committed in the company of the former, were confessed to the latter. And as for the easiest of all religious duties,—a sermon to be heard,—it was natural that this should be carefully attended to, if the preacher should be renowned as a man of talent, or of great peculiarities.

LXII.

A COTERIE.

This last reputation, as we have seen, belonged to Bridaine. He had been much talked of for several days. His merits and defects had doubled in the public imagination. Those who had seen him at Versailles, wished to hear him in Paris; those in Paris who wished to hear him, longed for the moment when they should see him in the pulpit.

He was to preach, as was his custom, at nightfall, and the church was full at noon. The chairs hired at five sous by the people inclined to make a business of it, were let again and again at higher and higher prices. Many who had come in order to speculate, offered theirs, glad to sell for a crown what had cost them the quarter of a livre; and more than one honest bourgeois, after having hesitated for a long time between God and Mammon, had finally allowed himself to be seduced by the louis d'or of the marquis or the banker.

The assembly contained, accordingly, to its remotest ranks, few save the great, the rich, and men of letters. Helvétius, who was unsurpassed in the art of making himself at home everywhere, had hired the whole of one of the side chapels, and gallantly did the honors of it to all the philosophers, artists, and literary men whom he could perceive among the crowd. He did not implicitly observe the order, we see, that he should wait a month or two before showing himself in public. But who obeyed in those days? A few poor wretches at farthest.

There was much conversation going on in all directions, but nowhere so much as in the said chapel. "What should we do in a church but talk,"—when *we* are Grimm, Helvétius, d'Holbach, and *tutti quanti ?** They appeared astonished enough, moreover, to find themselves there. Upon each new arrival, it was easy to guess from their air, that the first words exchanged, invariably turned upon their mutual surprise.

"Well?"
"Well?"
"Did you take holy water, too?"
"Of course."
"And make the sign of the cross?"
"Yes."
"Very edifying."
"We must howl when others yell, my friend."
"And play the simpleton with simpletons, eh?"

"I believe there is some one in this confessional—"
"It is Maury—you remember,—the other evening—"
"Ah! good day, Monsieur Maury. I have not yet complimented you—"

* *All the rest.*

"Monsieur—"

"But how you are established there!—Paper, pens—"

"I am going to try and write down the sermon."

"Ah! that is not a bad idea."

"Monsieur, I thank you a thousand times. I was horribly uncomfortable in that mob. Thanks to you I now have one of the best places."

"I am happy to have been able to be of service to you."

"You are used to act in that way. Who have you in that little gallery?"

"Where?"

"There—on the left."

"I had not even seen it. I believe in fact, that some one has just entered it."

LXIII.

THE KING INCOGNITO.

And who was this some one?

About two hours before this conversation, a chariot with the arms of Richelieu had left Versailles at a rapid trot, bearing off the duke and the king.

The preparation for this enterprise had rid the king of two or three days of his habitual *ennui*. The marquise, instructed by Richelieu, had played the unconscious admirably. The king had received with evident satisfaction her compliments upon his good spirits, and these good spirits had increased from hour to hour, at the thought that he had succeeded so well in turning aside all suspicion.

As he rarely failed to pay for the few moments of gaiety he

might experience, by a still more violent return of his *ennui*, he had scarcely set out before his brow was clouded. Everything had changed its aspect to him. He had found it amusing to escape from the marquise, and now he asked himself bitterly, what sort of king he must be who found it necessary to escape thus from a woman like a schoolboy from his teacher, or a slave from his master. He had anticipated the sermon as a part of the pleasure, and now the seriousness of the thing appeared to him in all its nakedness. What was he going to Paris for? To hear threats which would terrify him, but not make him change his habits of life; warnings which could teach him nothing new in regard to the state of his soul, and would but serve, in fact, to make him still more inexcusable in the sight of God. He had for a long time past despaired of his strength; he had no longer even the resource, often lying, but at least consoling, of persuading himself that he would one day change. Such as he now was, he felt that he should appear before the face of God, an unfaithful king, a man burdened with vices, and a heart without life.

And yet this very despair, managed by such a man as Bridaine, might still become a means of salvation. The more serious, the more completely established the malady, so much the more effect is often felt from a remedy energetically applied. At Versailles, in his chapel, the word of God reached his ears like music more or less monotonous; more fitted to lull his conscience to sleep than to awaken it. There, moreover, surrounded by homage, more honored than God himself, it was but an affair of etiquette for him to hear a sermon; whether the discourse were strong or weak it was all the same to the ears of the king. At Paris, in a vast church, mingled with the multitude, recalled, by the universality of the instructions and denunciations, to a feeling of the equality of all

in the sight of God, he might yet be moved, he might return to his palace with a little more energy in his mind, a little more life in his heart.

LXIV.

THE CONFESSOR.—HIS ADVERSARIES.

His bad angel, in the shape of his confessor, awaited him upon the threshold of the church.

Richelieu had judged it impossible to bring the king thither incognito, without admitting the curé into the secret. The curé had offered the little retired gallery situated in the chapel in which we have seen Helvétius and his friends. It had been agreed that a priest should stand sentinel at the outside door by which they entered.

And in fact, they found a priest at this door, but this priest was Desmarêts.

"You here!" said the king.

"Sire, I may be here as well as any other. I was charged by the curé—"

"Charged,—charged—" muttered the marshal; "did he know whether it might suit the king for you to know that he was in Paris?"

"However, sire, I am ready to retire—"

The king entered without replying. A small staircase conducted him to the gallery. There was room for three; but Richelieu placed himself so that there was no seat for the confessor. Desmarêts remained standing. What cared he for the insult? He had his plan.

Concealed by the grating, the king examined the multitude with curiosity,—at first those at a distance, then those nearer.

and at last his eye rested upon those who were conversing just beneath him. He perceived immediately from their manner, that they were all acquainted with one another, and that accident could not have drawn so many of them to the same spot. He at length distinguished Helvétius, who had been at court, it may be remembered, as master of the queen's household.

"Why here we are, I believe," he said to the duke, "in the full encyclopedist conclave!"

The duke smiled.

"Ah, ha! your Majesty has discovered? I noticed it as I came in."

"And you said nothing to me of it?"

"I feared lest this vicinity might displease—"

"And you feared also, did you not, that I might think you too well acquainted with these gentlemen?"

"I do not know them all."

"No,—only the leaders and half of the subalterns. Come. Tell me the names of some of them."

"With pleasure, sire. Beside Helvétius—"

"He is just admitting some one else. Who is it? Ha! one Protestant of the memorial. They are acquainted!"

"Infidelity is the sister of heresy," said Desmarêts, gravely; "in tolerating one—"

"Beside Monsieur Helvétius," interrupted Richelieu, "is the Baron d'Holbach, then on the right, the old Baronne du Deffant, attended by her Pont de-Vegle, of whom your Majesty may have heard something, and here is Monsieur d'Alembert, of the Academy of Sciences—"

"I know him," said the king, with an absent air.

Richelieu went on, but the king no longer listened to him. Like a general alarmed by the contemplation of the opposing army, what to him mattered the names of the soldiers?

Known or unknown, strong or weak, they were soldiers, this was an army, these were the waves of a sea to which God alone had the power and right to say, "thus far shalt thou go!"

A terrible army this, in truth, of which all the soldiers, one after another, might have been imprisoned without causing it to cease advancing, increasing, encroaching! With a word, the king could cause any of the men at this moment before his eyes, to be shut up for life within four walls. But he had no longer faith even in prison walls. The new ideas were in the atmosphere.

LXV.

THE PRIEST.

And so he became more and more dejected, as he silently contemplated these demolishers of his throne, when a great movement at length aroused him from his reverie. The hour had struck. The crowd divided before the beadle, who advanced towards the pulpit, followed by a white-haired priest.

It was he.

He ascended, and with that glance which at once imposes silence upon the farthest extremities of a crowd, he looked around the whole building; then he said, slowly and gravely, but with a voice which resounded to the farthest corners:

"At the sight of an audience so new to me, it might seem, my brethren, that I should open my lips but to ask your indulgence for a poor missionary, destitute of all the qualities which you demand from those who come to speak to you of your salvation.

"And yet I have a different feeling, and if I am humiliated, do not imagine that I yield to the pitiful uneasiness of vanity.

God forbid that a minister of the word should ever think it needful to excuse himself to you, for whoever you may be, you are all sinners like myself. It is in the sight of your God and mine that I feel impelled at this moment to smite upon my breast.

"I have preached the judgments of the Most High in straw-thatched temples; I have preached the rigors of penitence to the unfortunate who were destitute of bread; I have saddened the poor, the best friends of my God; I have carried terror and grief to these souls which I seemed called upon only to console. This was my duty; I performed it; woe to me, if I had dared to believe, or to allow the belief, that sin in the lowly hut is sheltered from condemnation!

"But it is here, more especially, here, where I look only upon the great, and the rich, upon bold and hardened sinners, ah! it is here that the holy word must resound with all its power; it is here that I must place before you, in this pulpit, on the one hand, death, which threatens you, and on the other, the great God who comes to judge you.

"This day, I hold your sentence in my hand. Tremble, then, before me, proud and disdainful men! The necessity of salvation, the certainty of death, the uncertainty of its terrible hour, final impenitence, the last judgment, the small number of the elect, hell,—"

"Hell—" murmured Desmarêts, close to the ear of the king.

"—and, above all, eternity—"

"Eternity!" repeated the Jesuit.

"—these are the subjects of which I mean to speak to you, and which, thank God, I feel less disposed than ever to mitigate.

"And what need have I of your approval, which would per-

haps ruin me, without benefiting you? God will rouse your emotions whilst His unworthy minister is talking to you; for I have had experience of his mercies. Then, penetrated with horror for your past iniquities, you will come and throw yourselves into my arms, with tears of compunction and repentance, and then your remorse will make you think me sufficiently eloquent."

LXVI.

THE KING'S MIND.

A murmur ran through the church. If the orator believed that he had touched the hearts of his audience, he was mistaken. This murmur signified, "Good! Excellent!" It was with their heads they admired; it was not that their hearts acknowledged themselves subdued. To work, poor missionary, to work! Thou hast yet accomplished nothing, nothing but a beautiful specimen of eloquence, which this young man, this budding orator, will arrange to-morrow after his own fashion, in order to deliver it, ridiculously *philosophized*, to the bravos of an infidel age.*

Yet there was one man present in whose heart these words had left a more profound impression. This was the king.

The words eternity and hell, more especially, were the only ones which had retained the power to affect his imagination. He might close his ears and suffer them to remain unheard, but he could never hear them, that a violent shudder did not agitate him, that a reflection of the never-dying flames was not, to his terrified gaze, projected upon all around. It was from

* It is agreed that this famous exordium, as Maury reports it, is more by himself than Bridaine.

the senses that he demanded his happiness in this world; it was from the senses that he was to expect his chastisement in the next.

His confessors had done nothing to inspire him with nobler fears. Happy to perceive that after so many means had failed there was still one to be employed, they had not troubled themselves to raise him above the cowardly terrors of the flesh. It mattered little to them whether he loved God or not, provided that he continued to fear the devil.

This, then, was the feeling of which Desmarêts had watched the progress upon his countenance, during the exordium of the sermon; this was the feeling which he had done his best to heighten, by his sinister interruptions, and his terrifying adherence to the words of the orator.

From that moment the state of the king's mind was radically false. All that Bridaine might say grand and terrible, would certainly be lowered by him to the standard of his own terrified, childish imagination. After a few more shocks, Desmarêts would try a great blow. The king would not be converted by it, but he would bow his head. God would not be satisfied, but the Jesuits would.

The thing was, as we have already said, to make the king declare himself openly in their favor. But first he must be brought to connect his own cause with theirs; he must above all be fashioned to that obedience which they wished to find in him. For a soul without energy once to have yielded, is always a reason for it to yield again.

This was the reason why Desmarêts was so anxious to crush the project of an edict favorable to the Huguenots. His hatred for them was not at this time his only, or even his chief motive. He wished that this abandonment of them should be connected in the king's mind with scruples and fears which might be made use of for another purpose.

LXVII.

SUPERSTITIOUS TERRORS.

If Bridaine had been disposed to aid him, he could not better have done so, for he followed with terrible accuracy the summary which he had given in his exordium.

His first division had turned upon death.

"You must die!" he said; and the very tone in which he had uttered the words, gave to this assertion, so common in itself, and almost trivial, something new and striking. It was no longer a mortal man announcing a fate which is also to be his; it was a messenger from on high pronouncing a sentence.

"You must die! How harsh is this saying to every human ear! Harsh to those who have had many enjoyments; harsh, especially to those who have sinned without enjoyment, and who have lost their time for this life as well as the next!

"You must die! And when? It is a very happy thing, it is said, that you are ignorant of this. A happy thing that you are ignorant of it? Happy, yes, in truth, happy, but only in case you think of death, think of it unceasingly, so that you may defy it to surprise and terrify you, at whatever hour it may come. But if you never think of it, if you only approach the idea when it is put directly beneath your eyes, and when we hold you fast with both hands in order to prevent you from turning away your eyes; if, even then you only carry away a vague and vain terror, oh! then is it the chief punishment of your crimes, the first link of the pitiless chain with which an avenging God is going to bind you forever, that you should be ignorant of it. To be ignorant when you are to

die! Yes, for the righteous it is a blessing, because he is prepared for death at all times, and because the emotions of a death-bed, capable of working so many marvels in an instant of time, last for him twenty, forty years, a whole life-time! But for the wicked, the impious, for all those who have forgotten or braved the anger of God, this very ignorance is but the beginning of the darkness which is to increase forever and ever around those who are not worthy of the light. Once, once only, the darkness will be torn aside for an instant. When the last moment shall arrive, when the soul shall separate from the body which has lost and degraded it, then for an instant there shall be a great light. Time which is ended, and eternity which begins, shall be at the same moment illuminated. On the one hand, a past without God; and on the other a future without God. Here remorse,—there torment. And when the criminal shall have clearly seen, well measured the past, and fully comprehended that the future is now measureless, then all will fall back again into its eternal obscurity. Then go, go, thou guilty soul,—go on,—go on forever, go on, as if thou wert seeking, but thou knowest that thou wilt find nothing. Go on, as if thou wert hoping, but thou knowest that there is no more hope for thee. The only thing that could have rendered thy wretchedness endurable, was taken from thee at the threshold. Where eternity begins there hope ends!"

Thus spoke Bridaine. Was he quite right? Ought the hell of Dante to be that of the Christian theologian? A poor Christian he, in any case, who needs, in order to rouse his soul and restrain him from committing too much evil, to be terrified by eternal torments!

But such Christians are of necessity numberless in a sensual impressible age, when men pass lightly from impiety to fanaticism, from luxury to macerations.

And accordingly the impression was great, deep, general. It even reached the chapel of Helvétius. More than one of the leaders of the infidelity of the day, felt a shudder run through him, as he said to himself: "If it should be true!"

But the king no longer said *if*. He plunged his terrified gaze, with a feverish avidity, into all the abysses which the missionary uncovered; he felt upon his brow the heat of all those flames whose image was called up by Bridaine. His head became confused; his faculties weakened by dissipation, floated in an ocean of horrors.

And Desmarêts hanging over him, fascinated him by his inexorable gaze.

And upon this motionless face, he seemed to see the smile of a demon watching the tortures of the damned.

Suddenly he threw himself back; with his convulsed hand he seized that of Desmarêts.

"Save me!" he cried. "Save me!"

But Desmarêts appeared not to hear.

"Save me!"

"Sire," said Richelieu, "calm yourself; they will hear you."

"Save me!" he said, again.

"What can I do?" said Desmarêts, coldly.

"Much,—much."

"Nothing."

"Nothing—oh God! nothing!"

"Nothing, so long as—"

He stooped and whispered in the king's ear.

"This edict which you purpose making?"

"The edict?"

"Yes. Hope not to move God while you are making treaties with his enemies. This edict is already written down with

letters of fire in the book of crimes. It is there,—for eternity—"

And the penetrating voice of the missionary resounded through the gathering obscurity.

"Eternity," he said; "eternity! Know you what eternity is? It is a shoreless ocean, a boundless desert, a fathomless abyss. It is time, but time again become motionless as before the creation. It endures,—and it does not endure. It moves on,—yet it moves not. And the damned strive in vain to measure it. And a lamentable voice is heard from hour to hour, crying—'What time, O what time is it now!' And the voice of another unhappy wretch groans, 'It is eternity!'"

"Take it," said the king, precipitately, "take it, take it. Tear it. Eternity,—oh heaven! eternity. Tear it—tear it—"

And the edict fell, torn into fragments, at the feet of the Jesuit.

The charm was broken. The king had paid his ransom. Would not the blood of the heretics lead him to heaven?

He was calmer already. All his terrors were dispersed by the magic influence of an expiation at the expense of another.

The next day, in the enchanted groves of Bellevue, he related himself to his mistress the story of the gloomy sermon.

END OF PART II.

PART III.

A SERMON IN THE DESERT.

I.

THE TOWER OF CONSTANCY.

Sixteen months have gone by since the events last described took place.

Persecution has begun anew. At Toulouse, five Protestants are about to die. At Marseilles and Toulon the galleys have received a reinforcement. The doors of the convents are closed upon an unknown number of women torn from their families, and the tower of Constancy, at Aigues-Mortes, in which the number of prisoners had diminished to nineteen, has now twenty-five,—as many as it can accommodate.

It is to this tower that we conduct our readers.

Two large circular apartments, situated one above the other, occupy the whole of the tower. The lower one receives light only from the upper, through a round aperture about six feet in diameter; the upper one is lighted by a similar aperture pierced in the centre of the vaulted ceiling, beneath the terrace which crowns the summit of the tower. It is by these apertures only that the smoke escapes, and the fresh air enters, and with the air, the cold, rain, and wind.

Here live and die in the middle of the eighteenth century,

under royal bolts, padlocked by the Church, some poor women guilty of having gone to pray to God in the Desert, or of having sent their children thither. Several of them, as we have heard, have been there fifteen, twenty, twenty-five years; Marie Durand, nearly thirty; Anne Gaussaint, nearly thirty-eight years. Solicitations had continually been made for them, but in vain. Protestants and Romanists, Frenchmen and foreigners, all who dared to speak, had used their influence for them. The more innocent they were, as we have already said, the more it was feared that setting them at liberty would have seemed to admit their innocence.

But great alleviations had gradually been introduced into the internal arrangements of their prison. The population of Aignes-Mortes displayed a deep interest in them; and as an abjuration by one of them was an unheard-of occurrence,—at least history has brought us no hint of any such thing,—even the clergy had at length left them in peace. The Franciscans who were charged with their conversion, no longer did more than bring them news from without, alms, clothing, and Christian consolations, which they had learned from the prisoners to separate from all Romanist alloy. And at last a Bible had been allowed to enter! Their relatives and friends were permitted to see them sometimes. They received and wrote letters; we have seen Marie Durand in correspondence with Rabaut. These precious messages were always read by all. Gentle tears flowed from those eyes which had shed so many bitter ones; and for a moment, in spite of their heavy prison walls, they seemed to breathe the vivifying air of the Desert.

II.

EXPECTATION.

One day, or rather one evening, at the hour when the poor prisoners were usually stretched upon their pallets,—for they were allowed no other light beside that of the sun,—a great and joyful activity reigned in the tower of Constancy. The lower apartment, lighted by a lamp, contained all the captives. The beds were unoccupied, save one, that of the aged Anne Gaussaint, who had been long infirm; but the old woman, half-risen from her recumbent posture, followed the movements of her companions with an eager gaze. Her lineaments, faded by age and suffering, were illumined by the reflection of her happiness.

They had drawn all the beds to one side of the apartment. In the space remaining free, an old arm-chair was placed with its back to the wall. Before this arm-chair, was a table; the table was covered with an old cloth, upon which lay an ancient Bible with a much worn cover. And before the table stood a few chairs and benches, the whole of the worm-eaten furniture of the prison.

All was ready. The prisoners went to and fro. They seemed to regret having nothing more to do.

"Marie, what hour is it?"

"Six has just struck from the Franciscan church. We have time enough, for that matter."

"Unfortunately."

"If he comes later, he will stay later."

"You think so?"

"I hope so. It does not appear, at least, that the major* has fixed any particular hour for him to leave."

"The good major! What should we do without him?"

"If it were known that he is favorable to us, he would soon be dismissed."

"It is somewhat bold, in fact. A pastor admitted into the tower! A lieutenant of the king, who allows him to come in and go out!"

"Come in,—yes,—but go out—"

"Ah! Good God! The idea never occurred to me. Do you really fear a snare? Monsieur d'Ambly is honor itself—"

"He appears to be so."

"Have you any idea, any proof?"

"Nothing, absolutely nothing. And yet—it would not be the first time—"

Marie had forgotten that she was talking with the mother of Bruyn,—of *Judas* Bruyn, for this name was still given him. She saw her eyes fill with tears.

"Forgive me," she said, "forgive me! What was I thinking of? Let us talk no more of that."

"No; let us speak of it. My unhappy son! Ever since we have been expecting him whom he wished to betray, I can think of nothing but him. Where is he? What is he about?"

"Perhaps Monsieur Rabaut knows."

"Perhaps. But who would venture to ask him? I would not."

"Are you responsible for the—the—"

"The crime, you would say."

"——the fault of your son?"

* The commandant of the tower.

"No; and yet I tremble at the thought of seeing Monsieur Rabaut enter. To think that he might have perished,—under the hand of the hangman,—he,—our father,—our chief consoler after God,—and that my son would have been the cause of his death! Ah! Marie, you see it is this which rests like a weight, a terrible weight on my heart, a weight which nothing can take off. Even if he stood there speaking to me kindly, even pardoning my son, I should still seek in his glance the expression of horror which our name must inspire. But some one opens the door. Good Heaven! is it he?"

It was the major, going his rounds. He was to be supposed ignorant of the grave violation of the regulations of the prison which he was about to permit. Accordingly, he did no more than make his appearance, for he would have been obliged to notice the displacing of the beds.

"He is decidedly on our side," said one of the women.

"He looked very gloomy," said another.

"Very much pre-occupied," said a third.

"I should think he might. He perils his situation this evening."

"And for us. Well, what is the matter, Marie?"

"Nothing,—nothing."

"But still—"

"Nothing.—I only wish that it were to-morrow."

III.

A WELCOME VISITOR.

The door was again opened. It was Rabaut.

It is unnecessary to say what an immense event this visit was for the prisoners.

Some of them had known him. To these, it was almost as if God himself had appeared in their prison. Many of them, and Marie among the number, had never seen him; but for twenty years they had heard him spoken of. And accordingly, to the desire of receiving pastoral consolation, was added that of seeing this most extraordinary man, the hero of so many narratives, and the centre of that wonderful chronicle in which their obscure names had a place beside his.

But although they had known and repeated his name for twenty years, it was still longer since he had first known that of their prison, and since his imagination had traced its gloomy history. Although the prisoners of Aigues-Mortes were, upon the whole, not more unfortunate than many others, they had had the privilege of attracting a more peculiar interest. A tower, famous throughout the country, an old chateau, which was a monument of the crusades,* all contributed to render dramatic the humble existence of the captives, when seen from a distance. Rabaut had already a thousand times, in imagination entered these doors which had just been opened to him; he knew the lives of all these poor women whom he had come to see. He felt that his emotion must cause him to recognize even those whom he had as yet never seen.

At first they had all hurried towards the door; then respect had arrested them. They had mechanically formed a large circle around him. Some had thrown themselves upon their knees,—before God, not before man, for their eyes were raised and their lips moved; others could see but him, could as yet think of him alone.

* The fortifications of Aigues-Mortes, commenced in the reign of Saint-Louis, were completed by his son, Philip the Bold. A letter from Clement IV. to this prince, in which he commended his perseverance, or *constancy*, in building them, caused this name,—which it still retains,—to be given to the principal tower.

And he also was silent and motionless. His eyes were sometimes raised to heaven; sometimes they rested upon the prisoners. His hands were clasped in prayer, and then in a moment extended in benediction. No sound was audible save a few stifled sobs, and at intervals the voice of the aged Gaussaint, who murmured the words of one of their old hymns,

"Let thy poor servant now
O Lord, depart in peace."

At length the pastor advanced. He had perceived the table, and the arm-chair and the Bible; he wished before speaking to them, to speak once more to that God for whom they had suffered so much.

They understood his intention, and when he took his place behind the table, they kneeled down a few steps from it.

Then he prayed,—this time aloud. He prayed—shall we endeavor to repeat his words?—as would pray in such a place and in the midst of such an assemblage, one who daily risked his life in order to offer consolation to the suffering, and prayer to God.

"O God," he cried, "O our Father! Our hearts have ever been united, and our thoughts have met in their ascent to Thy throne. It is Thy will that our voices, like our hearts, should here ascend together. Oh! what shall we render to thee, Lord! What shall we do for Thee,—Thou hast done so much for us! Alas! we are poor sinners, and our very gratitude is a snare for our souls. We expend all the love which we have for Thee, in returning our thanks for this blessing of to-day; we forget that before Thou hadst granted it, Thou wert none the less our Father, our Saviour, our God. What is this benefit in comparison with those which Thou hast heaped upon us

in the Gospel? What are the rays of joy which have entered this place to-day, compared to the Sun of Righteousness always risen, always beaming for whosoever looketh to heaven! Thus, oh our God, at the very moment when we feel that we are all Thine, we have need that Thou shouldst raise and direct our thoughts; even upon their way to meet Thee, our souls might wander. Come, O Lord, teach us Thyself the way which leads to Thee. Let flesh and blood have no part in the worship which we are this day permitted to offer Thee. It is the first time, O God, and according to all human probability, the last also, that we shall pray to Thee united. Grant that we may be here, as we shall be in heaven."

IV.

WORDS OF CONSOLATION.

He took his seat. The prisoners, until then kneeling, arose, and he signed to them to be seated. But they did not take their places, and when he took the book, they once more fell upon their knees.

He had scarcely touched this Bible, when a new emotion was visible upon his countenance. He had recognized it; it was the old Bible of the Bruyns. He had chanced to open it at the place where lay the famous bloody signet,—and one of the prisoners, concealed behind her companions, had burst into tears.

"This treasure here!" he said. "Do you thus endanger such a heritage!"

"Who would have received it?" murmured the woman. "There is now no son to—"

Rabaut glanced at her almost with a smile.

"It is written," he said, "that even from the stones can God raise up children to those who serve Him.

"Gracious God!" she cried. "I may see my son again!"

"I know not whether you will see him. But you may love him."

"He lives!"

"Yes."

"He has repented?"

"Yes."

"You have pardoned him?"

"Yes,—and God before me. Calm yourself. This Bible upon leaving this place will be claimed by pure hands. Let us read, my sisters, let us read—"

And he began to read to them from the gospel of Saint John, the account of the Saviour's farewell to his apostles. This they had read and re-read oftener perhaps than any other portion of the Bible. There seemed to be so many things in these admirable chapters written expressly for them! They knew them by heart, and yet from his lips they sounded fresh and new. They were almost ready to inquire whether he had not added something to them. What could he have added? Did not they contain consolation, hope, all that could be asked?

"'Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me.

"'And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter;

"'The Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know Him.

"'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.

"'As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love.

"'If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

"'The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.

"'They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth good service.

"'And ye now therefore have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

"'Holy Father, I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil.

"'Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth, that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us.'"

V.

COMMUNION WITH GOD.

At these last words he ceased reading.

"Do you hear, my sisters?" he said. "*One with God!* There is the great mercy; there the great secret. *One with God!* And what then to us is the hatred and the persecution of men? Like Him, we are above it. *One with God!* What to us are temporal sufferings? In tearing from us our earthly possessions, the wicked will only have succeeded in opening to us sooner the gates of eternity."

He loved this noble idea, and dwelt upon it for a long time, At length he continued:

"My sisters, this is union with God. Let us complete it if

you will. Let this table become the table of the Lord. Where is the bread and the wine, my sisters?"

This had been thought of. To commune! It was their most earnest wish.

The sacred symbols were brought. The bread was on an earthen plate; the wine in a pewter cup.

"We have none but these," said Marie.

"So much the better. Jesus had none more costly."

They were about once more to kneel.

"No," said Rabaut. "Let us do as in the desert. Remain standing, and when I call you, come to me."

Then after a few moments of silent prayer, he continued.

A Protestant of our own time was asked in what form the communion took place in his church. His reply was: "Ask St. Paul."

And we also would reply to any one who might inquire how the communion was administered on this day in the tower of Constancy: "Ask St. Paul."

He said; "For I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said: Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me.

"After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying: This cup is the new Testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."*

Have you read this? Did you recognize the mass? And if you went to look, not for the mass, but the supper, the true supper of our Lord, where would you recognize it,—upon your

* 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, xi. chapter.

gilded altars, or upon those tables of which you are taught to make a mock? Where would Saint Paul have recognized it most easily, beneath the dome of Saint-Peter's at Rome, or beneath the discolored vaults of the tower of Aigues-Mortes?

The Protestant liturgy is founded, as is well known, upon the narrative of Saint Paul, and the exhortations with which he has associated it. When the minister had pronounced the consecrating words, the prisoners came one by one to him. To each one in turn, according to the usage, he addressed in the form of an exhortation, as he presented them with the bread and the wine, a few verses of Scripture. Then he went to the bed of Anne Gaussaint. She eagerly awaited her turn. Her eyes, her soul, her whole being had flown to meet the celestial food. Scarcely had she received it, before she fell back exhausted and breathless upon her pillow. And she repeated lower and lower,

"Let thy poor servant now
O Lord, depart in peace."

VI.

THE ESCAPE OF BRUYN.

And then, after once more offering prayer, Rabaut at length approached the prisoners. He related to the mother of Bruyn where and how he had found her son; he added what we have not yet had an opportunity to mention, how Bruyn had been released from prison.

He owed his release to Bridaine. Convinced of his innocence in his unfortunate affair with the Marquis de Narniers, the missionary had set to work courageously. Joly de Fleury,

the attorney-general, and the pet aversion of Voltaire, detested the Reformation at least as much as he did infidelity, but he was upon the whole an upright man. He listened to Bridaine; he questioned the marquise, and the latter, who had already conceived the idea of rescuing Bruyn, explained everything. But as his liberation could not take place without very complicated negociations between the parliaments of Paris and Toulouse, it had been agreed that Bruyn should be taken from his prison, as if to be transferred to his former judges, and that he should affect his escape during the journey.

This took place. Having returned to Paris under a feigned name, Gebelin had placed him with his bookseller, in the situation of the clerk who had informed in regard to the books. There, under the direction of Gebelin, he had made rapid progress in the way of life, upon which, by God's grace, he had again entered. But with his former faith returned his former zeal. He had not been able to continue long at the obscure labor of business; he had requested to serve as an aid to the pastors in the immense circuits which they made from time to time among the scattered flocks in the north and west.

He had been at work now for several months. He had already quietly organized more than one little flock long scattered abroad. To the happiness of laboring for the Church, was joined that of advancing his own re-instatement, for he would not as yet consider himself absolved. He would not be so, he said, until he felt himself worthy again to see his native province; and he wished not to enter it, until his labors should abundantly have covered his sin.

There were but few of the prisoners to whom Rabaut had not some details to give in regard to their familiar friends. They overwhelmed him with questions; their eagerness increased with the tears which his answers caused to flow. For

to each one he had some death to announce. The saddest interviews are those which are the most difficult to bring to an end.

VII.

TREACHERY.

In the meantime, the night was advancing. Many an hour had struck from the belfry of the Franciscan church, since the minister had entered the tower. There was heard too a sound outside the door like the whispering of people becoming impatient. They had supposed that these were the gaolers who were tired of keeping watch, for the major had forbidden them to enter, and they were not to open the door until Rabaut should knock.

Marie Durand alone still had her fears. This sound had appeared ominous to her; her countenance expressed such anguish that the minister at length perceived it. But he was at the moment relating many mournful events to which we shall have to return, and which to him sufficiently accounted for this expression; at most he thought that upon hearing his account of one of the pastors who was about to perish,* she trembled at the thought of the dangers constantly incurred by himself.

But suddenly he became silent. Without, upon the staircase, they heard the sound of the butt-end of a musket falling heavily upon the floor. He grew pale; the women remained immovable, frozen with horror. There was no longer any doubt. The door was guarded by treason. Flight was no longer to be dreamed of; to wait would have been to wear out by suspense, the courage which remained in him. He went

* Rochette at Toulouse.

directly to the door and knocked. It was opened. The staircase was filled with soldiers.

The women shrieked aloud; but he, face to face with danger, had recovered his courage.

"Whom have you come to take?" he asked.

There was no reply. The soldiers were motionless. They seemed to avoid meeting his eye.

"Whom have you come to take?" he repeated.

Still no reply; but an impatient, suppressed voice murmured behind the soldiers, "Go on,—go on." They recognized the major's voice.

"Monsieur," said the minister, and his gaze sought him in the obscurity, "it is not necessary for me to inform you of the infamy of this proceeding. Since you hide yourself, you must be aware of it."

And with that imposing gesture which always gave such authority to his words, he added,

"Wait for me."

And then he turned towards the prisoners.

"Adieu," he said, "adieu, my poor sisters."

But he was not able to continue, the sound of their sobs stifled his voice. They threw themselves at his feet; they clung to his clothes; they bathed his hands with their tears.

One of them had thrown herself against the bed of Anne Gaussaint. She was seen suddenly to spring up, cry aloud, and fall into a swoon. She had accidentally touched one of the hands of the old prisoner. This hand was cold and stiff. Anne Gaussaint had been heard; she had departed in peace. Her body was already cold, and she must have expired some time before, perhaps at the very moment when the pastor had left her bedside.

"Well," he said, "God be praised! It was I who opened the door of her prison."

Then turning immediately to the door, he said,

"Major d'Ambly, one of your prisoners is wanting; here is another, however. Come—"

The soldiers mechanically closed around him. It might have been doubted, upon seeing them, whether he was their prisoner or their commander.

"Come," he repeated, and the door closed, concealing him from the sight of the prisoners.

VIII.

GALLEY SLAVES.

Eight days had gone by. His friends at Toulon, the galley slaves, also expected a visit from him. They knew not to what they should attribute his delay.

Like the captives at Aigues-Mortes, they began to feel the effects of that toleration which began to be established in practice in spite of the laws, by subordinates in spite of their superiors, and by the superiors in spite of themselves.

But it was not long since they were still subjected to all the privations and all the sufferings of the criminals with whom they were associated. A letter written to the pastor Lafond, in 1753, by the galley slave Isaac Grenier, gives us sad details in regard to this subject. "Our circumstances," he says, "always depend upon the will of those who command us. They vary according to the caprice of these lawless and always more or less ferocious minds. You have received a description of the clothes with which they furnish us, and with which we must brave the cold of winter and the heat of summer.

Having no other nourishment than bread and water, and occupied with the labors of which you have heard, we cannot be exempted from them save by passing a sol* every morning to the under-officer; otherwise we are exposed to the same penalties, liable to be attached night and day by a heavy chain to a great beam." We must not forget to remark, that the writer of this letter was a gentleman by birth, and moreover that he was *eighty-three years* of age. Equality, still banished from social relations, existed at the bagnio, as we see, even for those who might have the strongest claims to consideration. Isaac Grenier had lost his son, a galley slave with him; his fortune was confiscated, and he owed the poor *sol* which he must daily give to his officer, to the charity of his brethren.

This very equality between the Protestant convicts and the ordinary criminals, was in itself a great advance, for they had at first been the objects of the most frightful treatment. In the time of Louis XIV., there was no torture, moral or physical, which was not inflicted upon them. The Catholic convicts were almost comfortable in comparison.

All this was now gone by. It was in vain that several of the parliaments—urged by the clergy, who were goaded on by their ceaseless need of expiating at the expense of others their Gallican boldness—had been seized with a terrible ambition to continue the work of the great king. Those whom they sent to the galleys generally found there protectors, friends, and attentions; in short, all the alleviations which their stay at the bagnio permitted. The harshness of their keepers was softened by their patience and courage. It was impossible to avoid making an immense distinction between them and the criminals whose fate they shared; and there was not one of the keep-

* A coin not quite equal to the present French penny.

ers who did not in his heart annul this monstrous assimilation pronounced by the magistrates.

And moreover, as at Aigues-Mortes, the well-established impossibility of obtaining conversions, had disgusted the priests; they held themselves aloof. Gentleness was unsuccessful, and violence was forbidden. Even there, they were particular in their adherence to the system, according to which the Protestants were asserted to be condemned, not as Protestants, but as having infringed those laws which forbade them to assemble themselves together. Sad fiction, which spared the persecutors some few cruelties, but which, on the other hand, served but to render the persecution as absurd as it already was odious.

IX.

FABRE AND HIS COMPANION.—"THE VIRTUOUS CRIMINAL."

A few days after the occurrence at Aigues-Mortes, two of our convicts, chained together, were seated in the arsenal. One of them, a young and vigorous man, was reading; the other, old and infirm, was half reclining upon a piece of timber, having in his whole frame the immobility of fatigue, and in his features that of profound hopelessness.

"How long a time have we still to rest?" he asked.

"About half an hour, I think."

"I stand in need of it. How am I to begin again!"

"Let me work for both. They will say nothing about it."

"Yes; but I must none the less be on my legs, and go and come, and follow all your movements. And in vain you endeavor to make them as gentle as possible, my poor Fabre, you hurt me terribly."

"You never told me so before."

"Why should I add this care to all the others which you give yourself on my account."

"You were my father's friend, and I am almost your son."

"*Almost?* No,—you are altogether my son! One thing is certain—only too certain—"

And he sighed deeply.

"——that I have no other."

Our readers have recognized the aged Bruyn.

"No matter!" he continued. "Thus to chain life and death together—it is frightful—"

And with his trembling hand he shook the heavy chain which bound him to his companion.

"Calm yourself," said Fabre; "am I not very fortunate, after all, to be with a friend? Suppose I were with some of these dirty rogues? Calm yourself."

He fell again into his silent hopelessness. His companion returned to his book.

"You would like better to walk about, I am sure," resumed the old man a moment after.

"No indeed, I assure you. Besides, you see I am reading."

"What are you reading?"

"Why, you know, Father Bruyn. My library has but one volume—"

"Ah! the comedy, which Monsier Court sent you. Your own history, is it not?"

"Yes,—*The Virtuous Criminal*, in five acts, by a certain Fenouillet de Falbaire."

"And it—it pleases you?"

"Ah! Father Bruyn, no convict's dress was ever so coarse that pride could not lodge beneath it. Yes,—I have a mag-

nificent character given me here. I am made to talk in verse, —and—yet—"

"Yet what?"

"Perhaps I am ungrateful. But after all, the whole piece does not seem to be worth much."

"Ah!"

"There are high-sounding words, high-sounding verses, high-sounding sentiments, but there is little or no nature, and still less religion. To make amends for this, there are improbabilities in abundance, and the most curious thing is that the author does not appear in the least to suspect that his hero is still alive. He has heard my adventure related, he has taken possession of it just it was, and without dreaming of inquiring the date. This mistake, for that matter, says more than all his declamations. Evidently it never once entered his head that the fact could be a recent one. Such laws appear to him to belong to another age. I should not be surprised if he were ignorant that there are still Protestants in the galleys."

"It is said that we shall soon have some more here."

"The gang from Toulouse ought to arrive about this time, perhaps to-day. There will be some Protestants among them we may be certain."

"Since Monsieur Rabaut has already delayed so long, it would be well that he should delay a little longer, in order that our poor friends who are to arrive may also have his visit."

"Yes; but his delay begins to make me uneasy. He wrote to me, as you know, from Aigues-Mortes. He was to see our prisoners that same day—"

"My poor wife," murmured Bruyn.

"——and set off the next day for Toulon. He had ob-

tained, he told me, permission to see us all in private, ten at a time. He will cheer you up again, Father Bruyn!"

"My soul,—yes,—and it is true that is the chief thing; but my body!"

"Body and soul, you will see."

"God grant it! By the way, you did not tell me whether he said anything to you of the solicitations begun in your favor."

"A few words."

"And these few words?"

"I did not wish to mention them to you."

"Why? Ah! I understand. Good Heavens!"

"Well, yes. He wrote me that they were going on with the solicitations. That the duke de Choiseul had taken the affair into his hands, and wished to lay it before the king."

"Before the king!"

"He adds that this play, poor as it is, has become the rage. That it is read in the literary circles, and performed in private, —that it will perhaps be performed at the theatre. In short,— that my deliverance is certain."

"And you will leave me!" cried Bruyn. "And I must remain! And you can— But no,—go, go.—Be happy, be free,—what is there in common between you and me? You devoted yourself to save your father; I was dishonored by my son."

"This recollection again! Again—"

"Go, go,—the name of Bruyn is only fit to be heard at the galleys.—But pardon, pardon.—You have been kind to me, and I can be jealous of your happiness! And yet—what a future for me!—Alone,—associated with I know not whom; good God!"

X.

NEW ARRIVALS.—RECOGNITION.

The bell sounded, and, in an instant, all were in motion throughout the arsenal.

But scarcely had they resumed their labor, when a cry,—"The gang! the gang,"—spread with the rapidity of lightning from the entrance to the furthest extremities of the bagnio. The bell again sounded. The convicts leaving their work, hurriedly formed themselves into ranks, and waited with clamorous impatience to be permitted to witness the entrance of their new companions in misery. The Protestants took no part in this brutal glee; but they were none the less anxious to see what brethren were now to join them.

The melancholy troop had halted at the entrance of the bagnio. When all the convicts had ranged themselves upon each side of the passage-way, it commenced its march.

The convicts did not then as now, travel in wagons. It was sad to see these unshorn faces, these travel-worn frames and bleeding feet. Some, with all the audacity of crime, seemed to revive in the atmosphere of the bagnio; others, in the abasement of cowardice or remorse, seemed to strive to hide themselves from view. A few, however, neither endeavored to show nor conceal themselves. If they bowed their heads, it was with the calmness of resignation; if they raised them, it was to seek for some friendly face. These were the Protestants.

Among the sixty who arrived, there were ten Protestants; a considerable proportion, which recalled the glorious time of Louis XIV.

"The Desert has given us a good crop!" said an old underkeeper to Fabre and Bruyn. "Are there any of your friends among them?"

"None as yet that I know. But they have not yet all passed probably."

"No—here are some I believe."

The column, in fact, was terminated by a group of Protestants. Fabre was startled to perceive among them his three friends, Sabatié, and the two brothers of Madeleine,—the Rebouls, who had aided him to form Rabaut's body guard, on the day of Bruyn's treason. They too had recognized him, and shook their heads smilingly, like friends who meet unexpectedly.

They passed on. Fabre followed them with his eyes. The aged Bruyn was annihilated. It would have been less trying to recognize his son in this hideous livery, than to behold the arrival of the witnesses of his shame.

"To work!" cried the keeper.

Fabre, instead of obeying, began to follow the column. He was allowed to do so. The keepers were authorized to indulge him in every way which would not be too much opposed to general rules.

But Bruyn could not walk rapidly. The new comers were already arranged in one of the courts, and the intendant of the bagnio was about to pass them in review. Was it not necessary to inspect the merchandize just arrived, and to give a receipt to those who had brought it?

The intendant, the Marquis d'Origny, was the chief protector of the Protestants at the bagnio. It was from him that Rabaut had obtained permission to see them; he wished, however, like Major d'Ambly, that the thing should seem to be done without his knowledge. Accordingly, although he fre-

quently spoke to Fabre, and knew him to be aware that a visit from the pastor was expected, he had never spoken of him.

It was with much surprise, therefore, that our two friends saw him approach them with an agitated and menacing air. But they soon perceived that they were not the objects of his anger.

"Good day, Fabre," he said; "good day, Bruyn—"

Then in a lower voice, so as to be heard by themselves alone:

"He shall come.—Let him fear nothing—"

And he left them bewildered both with this confidence, and the singular mixture of irritation and kindness.

XI.

GREETING.—DISTRESSING NEWS.

The inspection at an end, they were able to approach their friends. Fabre threw himself into their arms. Bruyn, his eyes swollen with the tears which he could not shed, convulsively clasped their hands.

"You here!—and you!"

"Why not?" said Sabatié. "You too are here."

"Where were you taken?"

"Nowhere. It is no longer sufficient for our persecutors to surprise us at our assemblies, or even to punish those who are supposed to have been present at these. The circle of our crimes widen as our persecutors choose. We were asked whether we had not sometimes formed Monsieur Rabaut's escort. We could not deny it; we did not wish to do so. And so here we are."

"Does Monsieur Rabaut know that you are here?"

"He must know it."

"Then how is it that he did not write me about it?"

"Write! Has he written you lately?"

"Yes, from Aigues-Mortes—"

"From Aigues-Mortes!" cried the three friends.

"Yes, from Aigues-Mortes," said Fabre, surprised in his turn at their tone of amazement. "Did you not know that I received letters from him?"

"No; but—"

"He told me in his last that he would shortly arrive here."

"But, my poor Fabre, do you think they are going to content themselves with sending *him* to the galleys!"

"Send him—I do not understand—"

But he had scarcely spoken these words before the terrible truth flashed upon his mind. He turned pale, and feared to inquire farther.

"But," he at length resumed, "are you sure of what you say? It is only a moment since the intendant—you saw him speak to us did you not?—Well, he told me then, that Monsieur Rabaut was to come, that he had nothing to fear."

His friends shrugged their shoulders.

"The intendant—the intendant—"

"Yes, the intendant. He is our best friend here. He is sincere, he is kind—"

"Could he be kinder, better than the commandant of the tower of Constancy?"

"Monsieur d'Ambly is said to be an excellent man—"

"Excellent indeed—as a traitor—"

"Can it be he—"

"He himself. After that, trust your Monsieur d'Origny! Monsieur Rabaut—"

"But if he is taken," said Bruyn, "there is no longer need to take precautions."

"True. Take it for granted, then, that the intendant was jeering you."

"He?" said Fabre. "It is impossible."

"Believe what you will; but one thing is certain, too certain,—that our pastor is taken."

"He is lost!"

"Hush!—Listen—"

And Sabatié eagerly drew them to a corner of the court.

"Listen. We have just passed through the province. We saw a few friends here and there. They contrived to speak a word with us, in spite of our keepers. A terrible excitement prevails in the Cevennes. In eight days,—in four perhaps,—all Languedoc will rise. We shall see—"

A keeper drew near; they were obliged to separate.

XII.

SIGNS OF A TEMPEST.—CAMISARD LOYALTY.

Sabatié was right. At the news of the pastor's arrest, the old Camisard blood had boiled in the hearts of those so long oppressed. As we have already said, the courage and sacred associations of all, had resolved to unite together on that day when despotism should lay hands upon him who preached patience. This day had arrived. The Cevenols were going to raise their heads. It appeared to them that God himself, in allowing the limit which they had set to be crossed, had ordered the combat and pledged the victory.

The more moderate, even some of the pastors who, like Rabaut, had unceasingly preached resignation and peace, began to

doubt whether revolt could be a crime. They knew what duties God has imposed upon subjects; but had not a century of submission absolved them beforehand? And since this submission had brought no amelioration of their sufferings, since there was no hope that tyranny would spare a single vestige of their faith, was it not time to say now, with head raised and sword in hand if necessary, "It is better to obey God than man?"

And yet, there was not a province in France where the old and proverbial love of the Frenchman for his sovereign was preserved in more purity. Yes, the Protestants still loved their king, who crushed them, or allowed them to be crushed; to them he was still the anointed of God, and the grandson of Henry IV. Nowhere had the news of his illness at Metz, in 1744, been received with deeper or sincerer grief. A synod assembled at that time,* had left in its process-verbal a monument of this curious loyalism. "On the 20th of August, the session being ended, a member communicated a letter which he had just received, and which contained the sad and afflicting news of the king's illness; all then kneeled to implore, by an ardent prayer to God, the re-establishment of his Majesty's health. The synod afterwards decreed that prayers should be offered up as soon as possible in every church on the same subject." Two days before this, at the opening of the synod, we read: "After having read the word of God, and implored the assistance of the Holy Spirit, all the members of the assembly made the sincerest protestations of their inviolable fidelity to the king." It was decreed in consequence that each pastor should preach at least one sermon every year on the necessity of submission to the powers that be; and fur-

* It was the first general or *national* synod held since the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

ther, that a solemn fast should shortly be celebrated in all the churches, in order especially "for the preservation of the sacred person of his Majesty." Never had Christian submission or monarchical doctrine been more vigorously professed.

For that matter, it is not among the Cevenols only that we of the present time find it difficult to appreciate what the worship of royalty then was. Habit had rendered it nearly independent of the virtues and vices, the kindness or the severity of the actually reigning monarch. "Long live the King!" was shouted by the victims of the royal sword, just as the victims of the republican axe, thirty years later, shouted, "Long live the Republic!"

So that in those days people might revolt against royal authority, and even fight against the king's soldiers, without thereby revolting against the king, at least without having the least intention to do so. At the present time, this would be a mere quibble; we might with justice accuse any one who should make use of it, of insincerity; but then, the distinction was possible. Most illogical, it is true, it reposed none the less upon a real and unalterable sentiment. When the parliaments resisted the will of the king, they believed themselves to be as much royalists as ever; and when the Protestants were upon the point of taking up arms to protect themselves from oppression, it was still from their very hearts and consciences that they declared their wish of remaining the most humble subjects of the king.

At that time, there was in politics something analogous to what has always been observable in religion. Few men, in throwing off the control of God's laws, have the feeling of revolting against God; the greater number, almost all, would reject the idea with horror. And so with kings at that time. A king was a sort of god. He was, we say; he is so no

longer. This is the clue to all that may appear to us inexplicable in the feelings and conduct of the subjects of the kings of other days.

XIII.

GENERAL STATE OF AFFAIRS.—VIEWS OF VARIOUS PARTIES.

So far as external circumstances went, it was a long time since they had been so favorable to the projected insurrection. Financial embarrassments had gone on increasing; military affairs grew worse and worse. The fifth year of the seven years' war had arrived, yet there were no symptoms of its conclusion, and it only offered an undefined perspective of agitations and disasters. Exhausted from within, and humiliated from without, France was less than ever in a state to struggle vigorously against a party in her own bosom. The English had taken Belle-Isle, and from there threatened the whole of the gulf of Gascony. The Marshals de Broglie and de Soubise, at the head of one hundred thousand men, had obtained only a little success in Germany, soon followed by a defeat.* The famous *Family Compact*, concluded by the Duke de Choiseul,† between all the reigning princes of the house of Bourbon,‡ had thus far only caused fresh complications. The navy no longer existed; the colonies fell one after the other into the hands of the English. Twice, during the year, peace had been humbly offered to, not to say begged from England; twice had England answered by the mouth of Pitt, in the tone of an enemy confident of his advantage, who may have peace when-

* At Fillinghausen, July 16, 1761.

† August 15

‡ The kings of France, Spain and Naples, and the Dukes of Parma and Placentia.

ever he likes, and who in the meantime profits by all the chances of war.

It was a grave question for our Cevenols, whether, in case of failure, they should accept the aid of this power. The great majority were averse to it. After having so many times repulsed as an odious calumny, the imputation of being at heart leagued with the enemies of France, should they now throw open the kingdom to the same soldiers, against whom Brittany and la Guyenne were warring so bravely? Should the children of the old Camisards renew this anti-French alliance with which their fathers had been reproached?

Others, however, were less scrupulous. According to them, these were simply human considerations of honor, grave in human affairs, but insignificant where the rights of conscience and the interests of religion are concerned. In that same synod of 1744, the public fast ordered for the preservation of the king's life, had been at the same time "for the success of his arms." Successes had come; but what had they gained by it? All the soldiers left at the king's disposal by a triumphant peace, had been sent to Languedoc, and the persecution renewed more vigorously, more obstinately than during the last thirty years. To summon the English in order to deliver the country into their hands, would be, these Protestants said, a crime; but to accept the assistance they might offer in a purely religious struggle, was nothing more than profiting by aid sent from God himself. Why should they concede all the rights of a country to a land which for a century had treated them like pariahs? Is a step-mother a mother indeed? Can it be wrong to procure from without, some protection against her fury?

And lastly, some few, who might have been styled the philosophical party, although they bore very little resemblance in all other matters, to the innovators of the day, some few,

bolder, or more consistent, asked whether, in fact, they were not absolved from all obligations towards a country which had sworn their destruction; towards a sovereign who declared himself determined to treat them as enemies so long as they refused to abjure. Have they not broken all the ties,—inquired these.—which bound us to France? Because we are born beneath the same heavens as our oppressors, have we therefore contracted forever the obligation to look upon them as countrymen and brethren? Our brethren, our real brethren, are those who share our faith. As for the rights of the crown of France, which we have thus far admitted, nothing forces us to admit them always. Before the rights of the sovereign, come those of the people. Languedoc is more ours than the king's. If we give it to the English, England on that account alone, will be quite as lawfully possessed of it as France is now.

But this reasoning, conformed to the ideas of the age, and better than that, to the most uncontrovertible laws,—was far too *advanced* for the majority of the Protestants. They could not rid themselves of the idea that they would be committing a treasonable act in summoning to the centre of the kingdom a nation, with whom France was at war from without. It was long since they had learned to feel that Frenchmen were not their brethren, but they could not abandon the hope that they should one day be so. In spite of their persecutions, they felt as if there were only a factitious separation between them and the rest of the nation. They did not wish to replace by an insurmountable division, this wall raised by fanaticism, but which might fall before the first breath of justice and reason.

Such was, and had, upon the whole, always been the state of feeling. These details appeared to us to be necessary. The history of the Protestants of the eighteenth century is

generally so little and so ill understood, even by their descendants, that we must let no opportunity pass for defining its principal features.

XIV.

THE OLD CAMISARD OF THE PONT-DE-MONTVERT.

In the meantime, there were as yet no leaders, and no plans. They could no longer consult him who for twenty years had been the centre and soul of the churches; it was even asked with some uneasiness, whether he would approve of the insurrection. Every one felt the necessity of waiting at least until his trial was commenced. Not knowing where to begin, they hoped that circumstances might give the signal and impetus.

They confined themselves, accordingly, to collecting as many details as possible in regard to the enterprises, the resources, failures, successes, and reverses of the Camisards. *The history of the troubles in the Cevennes*, by Antoine Court, published by his son the preceding year, was in everybody's hands; but this was not sufficient. The aged men were questioned. They were petitioned to repeat all that they had seen or known of the combats of that period, and whoever had figured in them became again the hero of the day.

But of all the surviving heros of the old Cevenol epic, none had retained so much energy in his narrations, and so much freshness of soul, as the aged Antoine Reboul. From the first troubles in 1702 to the last in 1709, he could relate and depict all. In many parts of Court's book, he had to set down upon paper the accounts, of which Reboul's memory, always young, was an inexhaustible storehouse.

But the Listorian had not been able to re-produce the original manner, the uncultivated eloquence, and the energetic gestures of the old Camisard. No one was better able than he, to transport his hearers into the midst of the commotions of his youthful days; none could better mingle with a warlike enthusiasm and the impulses of an ardent faith, all the gravity of age and experience.

None, moreover, not even excepting Rabaut, had given more constant proofs of courage and devotion. His life—and he was approaching his eighty-third year—had been one long combat. Upon returning home after the disbanding of the last troops, he had only changed his mode of warfare. Always the first and the last at the assemblies and the synods, every danger had found him at his post; and yet, like those old soldiers of whom the bullets seem to be afraid, he had never been surprised, nor compromised, nor personally disturbed.

But he had seen all the blows which had spared him fall upon those who surrounded him. His wife, cruelly used by the soldiers, had expired in giving birth to a son. This son, after becoming a man, had died at the galleys in 1750. He had left three children, a daughter and two sons. The two sons we have just seen arrive at the bagnio. The daughter was Madeleine, the betrothed of Bruyn. No one had been able to trace her since she was carried off.

And it was to this man, cruelly tried as he was, that all now came for strength and courage. Every evening saw some of the Protestants of the neighborhood arrive at his old house in Pont-de-Montvert. They conversed, read the Bible, and prayed. They came with their hearts oppressed, and went away a little less sad. Sometimes, in the middle of the evening, a peculiar knock was heard. They started, and hastened to the

door, but without a light, for the visitor must not be seen from without. It was a pastor on his circuit, who came to ask a night's shelter. And yet, alas! this same house had witnessed the arrest of two pastors; Dombres, in 1689, and Arnaud, in 1718; it was indeed a great favor that the house had not been demolished, as the edicts ordered in such cases. But, in spite of danger, the pastors preferred the pious hearth of old Reboul.

For some days past, however, these meetings had assumed another character. Pont-de-Montvert remembered that in other days, it had given the signal, and wished to hold itself in readiness to do so again. Young and old assembled secretly at the house of Reboul. A committee was formed. A great meeting had been decided upon.

XV.

THE CAMISARD'S STRUGGLES.—THE SWORD.

Night approaches. We will enter. No one has yet arrived. Reboul is alone in his vast kitchen, where, in an hour, is to be held the first council of the insurrection. He has left his staff in the corner; he moves to and fro like a man of twenty-five. Have we not gone back this evening to 1702?

He has just placed his Bible upon a table at the right of the fireplace. It is this Bible,—God through the words of this Bible, who is to preside at the meeting.

He seats himself before the holy book, and collects his thoughts for a moment. He opens it, finds and marks two places. We shall see presently what they were.

Then he again begins to walk to and fro; but his step is slow,—his frame less erect. One would say that he suddenly felt again the weight of years.

Beneath this appearance of energy and audacity, more than one struggle had taken place within the last few days in his mind. Ought he, with one foot in the grave, to take upon himself such a responsibility? Death would soon free him from all the ills which this war might bring with it; but in what situation would he leave all these young men whom he would have urged on to their ruin,—this whole province upon which he would have contributed to draw down the most terrible vengeance?

These moments of anguish were succeeded by others of zeal. He had often enough braved all these dangers to which he was about to summon his brethren, to escape all imputations of selfishness or cowardice. Who would dare to ask him by what right he urged war? He had purchased this right nearly sixty years before, at the sword's point and in the midst of an hundred combats. Whatever may be the results of the struggle, he will be pardoned for having wished before his death to salute the dawn of that liberty for which in his youth he had fought in vain.

"Yes!" he said, "yes!" And he continued his walk with his head raised and his figure firm and erect. "Yes! the measure is full—War! God wills it. We have only waited too long. Yes,—too long! But no; no regrets. We have waited a long time—a long time;—so much the better! Our cause will on that account appear only more sacred in the eyes of all men,—as it is already in the sight of God! Come, my trusty sword, come—"

He went and opened a closet. There, within a false partition, of which he alone knew the secret, had reposed for half a century, all his Camisard accoutrements; a long musket, a cuirass taken from one of those dragoons so terribly notorious in the Protestant persecutions, a large hat, two pistols, and

lastly, the sword, whose elegance contrasted with the roughness of all the rest. It had descended to him from one of his ancestors, a comrade of Henry IV. It had figured at Ivry, and at Arques; and had thrown its weight into the balance in favor of those Bourbons, so ready to forget to whom they owed the throne.

"Here it is," he said; and he went to lay it upon the table. "There," he resumed; "there. If thou canst no longer be of use in my hands, at least speak in my place to those who are strong enough to fight,—young enough to hope."

XVI.

REBOUL'S REMINISCENCES.—THE CHATEAU OF SERVAS.

Several friends entered at this moment.

"At last!" said Reboul.

"Are we late?"

The clock struck seven.

"No,—I thought—but this day has been interminable."

The others arrived, but one by one, or at most two came together, some by the street, others through the garden. A sentinel had been placed at each entrance. The night, dark and misty, was favorable to the confederates, but might also aid treachery. They accordingly endeavored to enter separately, and as if by accident. The meeting was only to be opened at eight o'clock.

"Can you not relate us something in the meantime?" some of the young men asked the master of the house.

"Relate you something, children! I have told you everything long ago."

"Perhaps you have. But we did not then as now think of

imitating you. Come,—anything you like. All will seem new this evening."

"To-day is the— ?"

"The sixteenth."

"The sixteenth of December.—Good. One of my oldest anniversaries."

He had taken his seat in his chesnut-wood arm-chair, standing in the chimney corner. The young men, standing, had formed a circle around him.

"Yes,—it is to-day," he repeated, as if talking to himself. "The sixteenth of December, seventeen hundred and two."

"Children," he resumed, aloud, "you have seen the ruins of the château of Servas, have you not? between Alais and Uzès. Well, it was destroyed fifty-nine years ago, to-day."

"Thanks to you."

"Thanks to God, in the first place,—then to me,—then to thirty others, of whom the last one died at least twenty years ago."

"And you took this château?"

"Not by assault. I entered it bound hand and foot."

"A prisoner? But you told us you had never been taken."

"Wait. This château was our greatest dread. There was a garrison in it, not very numerous, but composed of all the most vagabond who could be collected, among the troops in the province. Nothing suited them better than to hold us in check, and kill some of us when they could; it was their trade and their duty. But for them to levy contributions upon our villages as they did; to rifle upon the highway at noon, all whom they were pleased to look upon as Protestants; to huddle together women and children in the dungeons of the château—this was simply robbery,—and it must be put an end to.

"What was to be done? Attack the château? No, we would have broken our force in vain against its walls. Cavalier, our chief, could not sleep for thinking of it. 'Listen,' he said to me one day. 'You must let your hands be tied behind your back. You are a prisoner, one of these rascally Camisards, whom I, with a detachment of thirty men, soldiers of the king, am charged to deliver to the commandant of the château. I come to the door,—it is opened,—I enter, with some of my men, with the thirty if I can, and—you understand?' 'I understand,' was my answer. 'Only let them take good care to unbind me, when it is time to use my arms.'

"The thing was done. In order, however, to give more probability to the fable, and also to have more men enter the château, five companions were given me.

"We arrived at the château, they and myself as Camisards, our guards, disguised as soldiers, and Cavalier as an officer, for we had a stock of disguises; the soldiers who were killed by our balls, furnished us with enough of them.

"The commandant received us graciously; *us*, that is to say our guards, for as to us, the prisoners, we were taken down into a sort of pit, without air or light, where we could not have lived three days. But we had not been there three minutes, when we heard a noise, then steps and shouts. We were taken out of our well, arms were given us, and the château was our own. An hour after, a tall column of flames and smoke announced to all the province the victory of the Camisards."

"And did they not make you pay for this victory?" asked one of the listeners.

"They tried to do so. A week afterwards, the Sunday before Christmas, as we were worshipping at Mas Cauvi, in the district of Saint-Christol, we saw the chevalier de Guines

arrive, with the garrison of Alais, three or four hundred armed citizens, and fifty mounted gentlemen. We were in all eighty, but eighty who were worth four hundred;—in the first place, from our courage, be it said without vanity, and also, more especially, from the terror which began to surround our name. The gentlemen wished to be the first to attack. Our fire killed five or six of them, and wounded a dozen. We sprang forward without awaiting a new attack. We overturned them upon the soldiers; the soldiers, overthrown, fell upon the citizens. In less than a minute, gentlemen, soldiers, and citizens, all fled at their utmost speed. We pursued them as far as we could, almost to the gates of Alais, and then returned quietly to finish our service. We had not lost a man; we had not received a scratch. Take notice, children. See what we may do, when we have God and right on our side!"

XVII.

CAMISARD STRUGGLES.—THE ABBÉ CHAYLA.

Reboul began to grow animated. His eyes sparkled; you would have said that he smelt the powder.

The circle around him increased; but no more questions were asked. Why should they ask questions? It was now only necessary to allow the bloody torrent of his recollections to stream forth.

"Yes," he resumed, "take notice, my friends. And be ye warned also, our rulers! When we could not be strong, we became cunning; when the lion, too closely pursued, was forced to conceal himself, he turned into a serpent.

"A fortnight had not passed since the taking of the château, when we entered into Sauve in the same manner; it was a

great town, almost a city, with walls, gates, and a regular garrison. It is true that we were nearly three hundred in number on this occasion, Cavalier and Roland having joined their forces. Fifty of us were dressed as royal soldiers. We arrived at the gates of the town, with drums playing, and officers at our head; we were a detachment in pursuit of the rebels. The gates were opened, and we were received as liberators. The soldiers, drawn up in battle array in the Place, were provided with refreshment, and the officers were invited to dine with Monsieur de Vibrac, the commandant of the town. But scarcely were they seated at table, before the approach of the Camisards was noisily announced. We ran to the gates, to defend them, as we said, but we opened them. Our friends entered; the citizens and the garrison did not even attempt resistance. They expected, poor wretches, to be put to the sword, but on this day, we wanted nothing of them save munitions and arms. We provided ourselves well, and took our departure. Ah! I forgot, we burned the church,—and we—shot the curé."

Reboul stopped a moment, as if to observe the effects which these last words would produce.

They looked at him with surprise. "The curé," murmured some. "Shot the curé."

"Well, yes," he said; "the curé. Does that astonish you? So much the better, you will be better than we were. Yes, we were cruel. Yes, we too often resembled the robbers who were let loose against our villages. Pity us, children, pity us,—and may God in his mercy, have forgiven our crimes! But before condemning us, think what we were,—what our enemies were, and what sorrows and disgraces we had endured before going so far. *You* are ruled with laws of iron, it is true; but they are at least laws. *We* had as many masters,—

as many executioners, rather,—as there were soldiers and priests in the province. The edicts are now no milder, but they have at length become a complete system of legislation. By dint of oppressing, they protect you. All is regulated; you know what you have to seek or to avoid, to desire or to fear. Then, there was but one edict, as it were,—one watch-word; namely, to annihilate us as soon as possible, and at all risks. And then you were born beneath this yoke; but we had seen all the conquests of our ancestors taken from us, and all the rights which we had believed assured to us by a solemn edict, and by our possession of them for nearly a century. You will not burn the churches?—So much the better; but you have not seen,—as we did,—five hundred of our churches levelled to the ground. You will not shoot the priests?—So much the better; but you do not know what the priests of those days were. What is that fox, the abbé Charnay, compared with the tiger Chayla, whose den was just here, at the end of the bridge, two steps from my house? The abbé Chayla! people shuddered at his very name. Fifteen years was he the butcher of the province; fifteen years he passed his days and nights inventing new persecutions, new tortures. He was sent to us in '87, under the title of inspector of the missions of the Cevennes. *Inspector*, truly! for there was not a house which he did not search, not an infringement of the edict which he did not know and wash out with blood. It was his happiness, his life to torture. The house which he had made his fortress, and which had belonged before that, to one of our brethren, André, who was assassinated by the chevalier de Genne, we knew to be constantly full, from the cellar to the garret, of Protestants, dying by slow torture under his hand. He kept them for months at a time fettered, fastened at the same time by the legs and the feet, so that they could

neither stand nor sit. He tore out with pincers their hair, their eyebrows, their beards. He had burning coals placed in their hands, and held them tightly closed until the fire was extinguished. Sometimes he would fasten around their fingers cotton dipped in oil. This was set on fire, and the fingers were eaten to the bone.*

"And these were only his amusements with those who could not be proved guilty enough to be brought to trial. Wherever he saw, or hoped that others might see sufficient grounds for accusation, he summoned the judges, or rather the hangman, for it was unheard of that any one should be acquitted, whose death he desired. The edicts punished acts alone, but he had arrogated to himself the jurisdiction of an inquisitor. Words, books, feelings, were all grounds of prosecution. A poor girl of this place, Françoise Brez, was hung for having said that the host ought not to be adored. From this window, here, I saw her go to execution.

"Well, in spite of this atrocious oppression, no one yet dreamed of resisting and taking up arms. We suffered, we died. We wished to continue to the end, like lambs led to the slaughter.

"God did not permit this. The abbé Chayla was to perish. His death was to be the signal for insurrection.

"And yet, God knows that the day when we fell upon this

* These details, which might be thought mere inventions, or at least greatly exaggerated, are reported in all the narratives of the time, with all the characteristics of the most perfect authenticity. They are, moreover, but too much in accordance with all that we know of the manner in which the Protestants were treated.

Strange contradiction of the human heart! The abbé Chayla had been a missionary among the savages. Many times he had beheld himself on the point of undergoing their horrible tortures. He had braved them with the courage of an apostle, and then he, in turn, had tried them upon Frenchmen and Christians!

accursed house, none of us dreamed of imbruing his hands in the blood of the abbé Chayla. We only wished to deliver his victims, one especially, Massip, whom some of you have known, and who was to die upon the following day. What had he done? He had served as a guide to the Protestants of Moissac who wished to take refuge in Geneva. His relatives and friends had gone to prostrate themselves at the feet of the priest; but he had laughed at their prayers and scoffed at their tears. One day, when we were assembled at Mount Bougés, we saw the wife, brother, and children of Massip arrive. Their sobs and cries interrupted the service. 'To-morrow,' they said, 'to-morrow he dies! And you will let him die!' We looked at each other in silence. We had just prayed for him; as to delivering him, that thought had not entered our minds. The boldest grew pale, not with fear, as we had already showed,—but we were so far from all thought of revolt. 'He must die, then!' cried his poor wife. 'He must die!' repeated the poor children. 'He shall not die!' I cried. And in an instant the resolution was taken, the plan formed.

"We were about fifty in number. We arranged a meeting for the evening in the same place.

"All came. A few swords, a few old halberts, ten or twelve muskets, were all our arms; many had nothing but clubs. Thus commenced the army whose chief was to finish by conferring as an equal with one of the marshals of Louis XIV.

"I am eighty years old, children; but if I should live twice as long, I never should forget that evening! It was in July. The night had set in late, but it was dark, damp, and stifling. One of those doubtful storms which enervate soul and body had long hung over us; it seemed to delay bursting forth until

we were ready to act. The night, the approach of danger, the novelty of the enterprise, all contributed to excite us. My thoughts went farther still. I had read the early history of the Swiss; I knew how a nation might be commenced. If we should become one! If this desert field should become our Grütli! Alas! it has remained unknown. Of all those who trod it upon that evening, I alone remain. And I have never seen it since, that it did not seem to me red with blood!

"We prayed, and then set out. It was midnight. The storm drew nigh, and the flashes of lightning showed us our way. When we were within a hundred paces of the town, we prayed again. And suddenly our enemy hears a solemn music mingled with the first mutterings of the still distant thunder. It is our little band, slowly and in good order entering the town, and singing that psalm which has since become our war-song:

'Let the Almighty now appear,
And we shall see our foes in fear
Abandoning their place.'

"We surrounded the house, and demanded the prisoners. No one appeared; all was still. We drew near. 'Fire!' cried a voice within, that of the abbé himself. A number of shots were fired from the windows, killing one of our number and wounding two or three. Then we rushed to the door, we beat it down, and hastened to the dungeons. What a sight! Some were fettered, their hands, by a refinement of barbarity, fastened behind their backs. Besides these poor creatures, who were forced to remain lying down, were others who must remain standing, their arms drawn up towards the ceiling, overwhelmed by the weight of the most terrible fatigue. We unbound them, and they fell to the ground. We wept, we groaned. Suddenly, as if by an inspiration of the devil, we

all cried, 'The abbé! the abbé! where is the abbé!' The abbé attempted to fly; but he was taken, and brought into the presence of his victims. We sprang upon him. I know not whether I struck him. I was told that he had begged for his life,—that he had said, 'If I have lost my soul by persecuting you, do you wish to damn yourselves by killing me?' But I listened no longer, I heard, I saw nothing more. I seemed to perceive surrounding this man, and pointing at him, and marking his brow with a bloody sign, all those brethren whose tortures we had just made to cease, all those who had perished under them, those who groaned as galley slaves, those who had died upon the gallows, or upon the wheel; all seemed to cry, 'No pity for him who has never showed pity!'

"And yet, in the midst of the excitement of the war, this murder was often recalled by us remorsefully. We often said to each other, sadly, in the midst of our disasters, 'Why did we kill the abbé Chayla? It was a bad beginning. God chastises us for it.' Often, even in the midst of our successes, when we came to examine more calmly the long extermination of which we had been the instruments, we still cried 'Why did we kill the abbé Chayla? It is to punish us for his death that God has made us kill so many others. We walked in blood, now we are condemned to swim in it.' Oh! no, children, no blood! No blood, save that which shall be bravely shed, if needs be, in battle! Fifty years of suffering have at length purified our standard. It is now spotless. Preserve it so! And may all friends of the Gospel, to whatever nation they may belong, accompany it with their sympathy and their prayers!"

XVIII.

HOPES AND LONGINGS.

All had now arrived. The story of old Reboul was listened to in profound silence.

At length, without leaving the fireside, he turned his seat round towards the assembly. They took their places. The table upon which we saw him arrange the Bible, was placed before him. He remained a moment in prayer, and then opened it.

It was at the beginning of the book of Nehemiah. The simple narrative of the sufferings of God's people had such an interest, such an applicability to the oppressed Protestants! These sighs and longings, these consolations and promises, suited them so well! They followed the captive Jews to the inhospitable bonds of the Euphrates, and hastened with all the longing of their souls the return of these same Jews into the land of their fathers. The captivity, the return, the rebuilding of the temple, were all to them a type and prophecy. They beheld themselves in these histories, they read there in unchangeable words the assurance of happier days. When should these promises be fulfilled? When should the dawn of liberty and peace arise over their mountains? When should their churches be rebuilt? Alas! after so many disappointed hopes, they ceased to interrogate the future. Voices which they almost thought inspired, had, at the beginning of the century, early predicted the cessation of their troubles. The century was passing away, and their troubles were still increasing. Their prophets had proved themselves either deceivers or madmen. They now put their trust wholly in God. "He who made these promises," they said, "knows how to

find a means of accomplishing them." And they consoled themselves by reading them, and they seemed ever more and more beautiful, consoling, and divine.

"'And it came to pass,'" Reboul read,* "'as I was in Shushan, the palace, that certain men of Judah came, and I asked them concerning Jerusalem.

"'And they said unto me, the remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province, are in great affliction and reproach; the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

"'And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.

"'And I said, I beseech Thee, O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love Him and observe His commandments—

"'Behold! we have dealt very corruptly against Thee, and have not kept Thy commandments.

"'But remember, I beseech Thee, the word that Thou commandedst Thy servant Moses, saying: If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations.

"'But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments and do them, though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there.'"

The *return* was the favorite idea, and the constant subject of preöccupation of these men who were exiled and enslaved in the very bosom of their country. But the most touching feature of their petitions, was the profound humility with which they accepted as chastisements from God, the most inhuman

* Nehemiah, i.

efforts of the cruelty of man. Their prayers, their liturgies, their hymns and the exhortations of their pastors, are all filled and profoundly imbued with this idea. They made no proud comparison between their pure morality and the corrupt habits of the age; they never hinted that they were more worthy than others in the sight of God, the Holy One, and that their sins had less need than others to be washed in the blood of the cross. From the bottom of their hearts they said with Nehemiah, "We have sinned against Thee; we have not kept the commandments which Thou hast given us!"

XIX.

THE WORDS OF GOD.

A man of God was to reply to these cries of one of God's people.

We saw Reboul mark two places in his bible. He opened at the second, and read:

"'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people.'*

"'Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.

"'Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel; my way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God.

"'He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

"'They that wait upon the Lord shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

"'O Zion, get thee up into the high mountain; lift up thy

* Isaiah, xl.

voice with strength; lift it up and be not afraid. Say unto the cities of Judah, behold your God!

"'He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

"'Behold, all nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity.

"'He bringeth the princes to nothing, he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.

"'Yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth; and he shall also blow upon them and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.'"

XX.

"VENGEANCE IS MINE."

It seemed, when he read these words, as if this breath which was to sweep away the kings of the earth, was now passing through their assembly. Their eyes sparkled; they clutched their hands convulsively. A mute enthusiasm was awaking in their hearts.

But the fire had been enough—perhaps too much stirred. Reboul ceased reading.

"Brethren," he said, after a moment of silence, "we are not this whirlwind. Let us not take upon ourselves a mission which would not be confirmed by God. Let us arm ourselves only to have the right to live. Let us ask to be allowed to build up in peace, but let us not destroy. As soon as we shall have obtained justice, we will return, humbly submissive, to the sceptre beneath which God has placed us.

"But until then, forward, brethren! The time for endurance

is past! No! God cannot wish that we should any longer unresistingly behold the destruction of our church. He cannot wish that we should still continue to allow the chiefs, the fathers of our faith, whom he himself has given us, to perish. Let us save them, or let us perish with them!

"Brethren, the shedding of blood is a terrible thing! I know it; I, who in other days shed it—and yet—I—I the last of the Camisards—after fifty years of patient suffering—I say to you—'Forward!'

"What are we to do? Where are we to begin? We know not, as yet. We shall endeavor presently, with God's help, to trace out our path, to calculate and organize our resources. But each one of us has now had time to ask, and it is the duty of each one secretly to ask his conscience what he came here to do, and with what object he wishes to take up arms?

"Back! all those who feel themselves urged on by thoughts of vengeance! Back! all those who would strive after idle fame! Back! all those whose sole thought is not God and their own salvation! Let not such as these fight! They are not worthy to fight! They would only draw down upon our cause the wrath of God and the contempt of men!

"Let us kneel, then, brethren,—let us all kneel. Let each of us,—in the sight of God, and imploring Him to enlighten our consciences, once more address these questions to himself."

There was a profound silence. The Cevenols were all kneeling; their hands were joined, and their eyes were fixed upon the ground, as they mutely questioned their own hearts.

This solemn act was, moreover, customary in their worship. Often, especially on fast days, the officiating minister paused to order one of these searchings of conscience, a solemn appeal, which in these perilous assemblies, ran but little risk of degenerating into a vain form.

Reboul also kneeled. His head was supported by the Bible. His clasped hands, and snow-white hair, alone were visible.

At length he arose; and when all the others had risen, he said:

"Brethren, listen to me now, and answer, not me, but God.

"Are you still decided?"

"We are."

"Ready to suffer all things?"

"We are."

"In order to revenge yourselves?"

"No."

"You do not hate those with whom you will be obliged to fight?"

"No."

"You remain the king's subjects?"

"Long live the king!"

"You wish nothing save to live in peace, and to bring up your children, and to serve God?"

"Nothing more."

"You swear this?'

"We swear it."

"Well, then! once more, forward! Forward! with clean hands and pure hearts! From this moment, the sword must be unsheathed."

Reboul had seized his sword. He half drew it,—then stopped.

"O God!" he cried, "dost Thou permit it? If we should deceive ourselves! If we should offend Thee in trying to serve Thee! But no,—Thou wouldst arrest us. Thou wouldst not permit us to destroy ourselves for this world and the next."

And with a hand trembling with emotion, he half drew the

sword and then pushed it back; then he drew it again, but slowly, as if he wished to delay the fatal moment when the point of it should be visible. Once unsheathed, it seemed to him that war must be inevitable, and he was terrified to feel this symbol in his power.

At length, and this time the point came forth, he cried: "Behold it!"

Then in a lower voice:

"O God! When shall it again be sheathed!"

XXI.

THE FINGER OF GOD.—RABAUT CAPTIVE.

But upon the countenances of his audience suddenly appeared an indescribable amazement. He too had heard a movement behind him, near a door which opened beside the mantel. At the same moment, a hand was laid upon his arm.

"Reboul," said a well-known voice, "put back the sword into the scabbard. It is written that he who shall smite with the sword, shall perish by the sword."

It was Rabaut.

How did he come there? What had taken place since th news of his arrest had spread anxiety throughout the Cevenne It is time for us to inform our readers.

Upon leaving the tower, he had been conducted to a room in the major's quarters. Two sentinels were at the door, and two walked outside before the window.

But even if he had not heard their steps, the idea of escape would never have occurred to him. He was broken,—overwhelmed. His last effort at calmness had been successful, but at the cost of the last strength of his soul.

Twenty years of dangers braved with equal success and boldness, had, as we before said, made him somewhat of a fatalist. No one could be more submissive to the will of God; and no one, until then, could have been more justified in believing that God was with and for him. He had believed himself invulnerable; and had just discovered that he was not so. The charm was broken. He abandoned himself to his fate. He had now only to abstain from murmuring, and to die.

He did not murmur; but he had not yet come to appreciate his whole wretchedness. The greater and more sudden the fall, the more time it requires to feel it thoroughly. It is only smaller sorrows, which immediately take possession of all the room in the heart, which is at their disposal. The heart is like a vase, into which drops of water can easily enter, but which a torrent,—were you to pour one upon it,—could only fill by degrees.

But he felt his wound grow every moment deeper. As he recovered from his bewilderment, he passed in review all that was bleeding within him. He exhausted himself, in numbering his wounds.

As for the thought of death, he had neither to approach nor to avoid it. It was an old acquaintance, a friend, or an enemy, with whom he was too much in the habit of living, for it now to appear much more terrible than usual.

It was little for him to die, then; but to feel himself torn from those churches, of which he, after God, was the support,—from the apostleship which had become his life,—from the companions whom he loved, and to whom he was so necessary,—from the wife who had shared all his dangers,—from the son, whom he had rejoiced in the thought of soon guiding in the same career,—this was the sharpest pain, this was the thought of horror.

Then, in this wandering life, he had contracted an unconquerable need of motion, air, space. This door had not been closed upon him an hour, and yet he felt as it were already the fatigue of a long imprisonment. He seemed to be stifling in this room. He walked to and fro, restless and agitated, like the forest animal in its narrow cage. At each turn it seemed to have contracted around him. At length he seated himself. A few tears escaped from his eyes. A little calm re-entered his heart. He had the strength to pray; and he thanked God for having given it to him.

XXII.

MACHINATIONS OF CHARNAY.

A pistol shot was heard.—Monsieur d'Ambly had blown out his brains.

The unhappy man had not been able to overcome the consciousness of his crime and his disgrace. This treachery weighed too heavily upon the old soldier's heart.

And it was not he who had proposed it. His conscience had been worked upon, as that of Bruyn had been, by the untiring enemy of Rabaut and the Protestants; by Charnay.

His circuit had brought him accidentally at that time to Aigues-Mortes. He had heard from Monsieur d'Ambly himself of the visit promised to the prisoners. The major, who was aware of his hatred, had spoken to him of it only on account of the singularity of the occurrence, but as an affair with which Charnay himself had absolutely nothing to do. As for treachery, such an idea had never entered his mind in his life, and he did not now imagine that any one could dream of requiring such a thing of him.

Accordingly, Charnay had taken good care not to speak to him of it immediately; he had jested about the matter.

"Monsieur Rabaut, really?"

"Really."

"The only thing wanting, is for you to invite him to dine, and me to meet him."

"Nothing to prevent. They say he is excellent company. Shall I?"

But the Jesuit changed the subject. He knew that after having partaken of a meal together, the treachery would present itself in such an odious light that the major could not be induced to dream of it.

For a moment it occurred to him to leave the major entirely out of the plot. Nothing was easier than to have Rabaut arrested as he entered the prison, or quitted it. But by this proceeding, the Jesuit would take upon himself and his companions all the odium of the matter. He would accordingly only have recourse to it in the last extremity, upon the explicit refusal of the commandant. He had still two or three days before him. Nothing obliged him to decide immediately.

The next day he encountered the major, apparently by accident. They conversed a moment, and were about to separate, when Charnay said,

"Apropos, I have been thinking of you all night."

"Of me!"

"Of you. Do you know that if what you mentioned to me should come to the knowledge—"

"And who should inform? Not you, I fancy."

"Nonsense! But, still, it might be known, and Monsieur de Saint-Florentin is no joker."

"Upon my honor, perhaps you are right. Taking all things

into consideration, I shall request this Rabaut, when he comes, to go away again."

This was not Charnay's game.

"Send him away—?" he said; "and yet if necessary—Well, you can reflect upon it."

In the evening, they again met to sup together with the curé of Aigues-Mortes. The major took Charnay aside.

"I have been thinking over the matter," he said, "and I do not know in fact what I shall do. It would be singular to send him away. And yet, to let him enter,—yes,—as you said, Monsieur de Saint-Florentin is no joker. After having guarded others, I might come to be guarded in my turn."

"You have acquired a taste for the business, I imagine."

"And for that very reason, I should not like to change it. Although I must say, Aigues-Mortes already has to me very much the effect of a prison."

"You are ennuyé, here?"

"Tolerably. I have lived at Paris, Father."

"And you would like to die there."

"I should like still better to live there. But how is that to be accomplished? Here I am, and here I stay,—like an old bolt as I am."

"Good bolts have their value, major. They are needed at Paris also."

"Yes, at the Bastile. But there are enough without me, unfortunately."

"One situation is vacant, however."

"Which?"

"Under-governor, I believe."

"Ah hush! You make my mouth water."

"The Bastile is in Monsieur de Saint-Florentin's department."

"What of that?"

"Monsieur de Saint-Florentin could give you the said place, if you choose."

"That is certain; but for what reason should he choose?"

"How do I know? Recommendations—"

"From whom? Who ever thinks of me?"

"Some signal service rendered—"

"Signal service! At Aigues-Mortes? In taking care of my twenty-five old women?"

"Listen. Twenty-five have been put under your keeping—"

"Yes, twenty-five—What then?"

"Well,—suppose, for instance, you should render up twenty-six—"

D'Ambly recoiled, as if he had stepped upon a serpent. But the serpent had bitten him. In vain did he turn away, casting a look of contempt and anger at the Jesuit. The poison was in his blood.

Shall we continue to give the details of his seduction? Shall we describe his anguish, his long struggle with himself and Father Charnay; for the latter had gradually come to speak out plainly, to press the matter, to command, as formerly with Bruyn? The result of the struggle has been seen. Monsieur d'Ambly had taken Rabaut prisoner; then, overwhelmed with shame and remorse, a pistol shot had put an end to his sufferings.

XXIII.

CHARNAY AND THE MARQUIS.

But why, rather than take his own life, had he not simply restored the minister to liberty?

He might have done so, but he dared not. He did not even

dream of it. Charnay was there; Charnay fascinated him by his glance. In selling him his honor, the old soldier had sold him his courage, his soul, his whole being. He had scarcely conducted to his room the prisoner whom he dared not to look in the face, when he shut himself up in a retired apartment, and it was there that the soldiers, startled by the shot, had found him dead.

There was immediately a great confusion throughout the building. Rabaut heard steps, cries, and a voice unknown to him, but whose harsh and dry tone penetrated through the confusion, and which appeared to be giving orders. It was the voice of Charnay. He had taken upon himself the command of the house, and the soldiers obeyed him without a word. They knew him moreover to be the real commander-in-chief of all the troops destined to act against the Protestants.

Suddenly Rabaut fancied that he heard an altercation between him and another person, who seemed to have just arrived. The going to and fro ceased. The two voices approached, speaking more and more angrily.

"It is my fate, then," cried one, "to meet you wherever some infamous thing takes place!"

"Those who meet me there are apparently those who are there themselves," said the other.

"Those whom you *drive* there if you please."

"Or whom you aid me to drive there."

"Monsieur!"

"Why, certainly. Have you then forgotten the Cevenol?"

"Ah! you imagine that because I have been your accomplice upon one occasion, I am going to be always in your power. Undeceive yourself. Treachery was unsuccessful in that case; it shall be so once more."

"He is luckily under lock and key, now."

"Indeed?"

"He is my prisoner!"

"There is no such prisoner here. There is only a man here who has been treacherously arrested, and who is going to be set at liberty."

"You would dare to—"

"Who is the master here, Monsieur?"

The king! and the king does not choose that a rebel should be allowed to escape."

"It is I, who at Aigues-Mortes am in the king's place; and the *rebel* is going to be set at liberty."

The voices drew nearer and nearer. The other speaker seemed to be hastening after him who had just spoken.

"Colonel!" he cried, "Colonel, take care. The whole thing shall be known!"

"Yes, the whole, the whole, rest assured. It shall be known that a brave officer has blown out his brains for having yielded a moment to your counsel."

They had now reached the door. Rabaut was half suffocated with agitation and anguish.

"Colonel! Colonel!" cried the Jesuit. "In the name of God!"

"Hold your tongue, in the devil's name! Sentinels, bring him!"

"You shall not open the door."

"I shall open it."

XXIV.

FREE.

The door was opened.

Overcome by emotion, Rabaut had sunk upon his seat. He could scarcely rise to go and meet his liberator.

"Monsieur," said the latter, "you are free. Go where you will, but as quickly as possible," he added, lowering his voice. "Go. In an hour, perhaps in less time, I shall no longer be master. These people know, see, and can do everything. You heard, without doubt. If Father Charnay—"

"Charnay!" said the minister.

"Yes. Ah, true; you did not know him, perhaps."

"No."

"I understand. You could not imagine. But his name, that at least you know; his hatred, you have had proofs enough of it; his power,—upon my word he himself alone knows where it begins and where it ends. So no delay. I will have you escorted as far as the inn. Have your horse saddled, and set out."

"May I at least know to whom I owe—"

"The Marquis de Narniers, Monsieur."

For an instant Rabaut believed that he had fallen from Scylla into Charybdis. Could this name accompany anything but a fresh snare? He recoiled a step or two. An involuntary distrust and contempt revealed themselves upon his countenance.

"Monsieur," said the Marquis, gently, but proudly; "you insult me. But you have unhappily acquired the right to do so. Time is precious. Do not let us waste it in explanations. When you are in safety, you will perhaps be more disposed to give me your esteem. But go, now."

XXV.

THWARTED.

Ten minutes afterwards, Rabaut left Aigues-Mortes, and took the route to Toulon. It was two o'clock in the morning.

At day-break the Jesuit came through the same gate and took the same direction.

He knew, from the Major, the purposed visit to the galleys. He was, accordingly, going to try whether he should be more successful at Toulon than at Aigues-Mortes. Since he had gained Monsieur d'Aubly, he might also gain Monsieur d'Origny: and Monsieur d'Origny perhaps, would not blow out his brains. Of course, he would not tell him why the Major had done so. Then he would arrange the matter so that once more in the snare, there would be no longer any danger of the prisoner's escape.

But his project was to fail on all sides.

In the first place, the intendant of the galleys was not a second d'Aubly. Charnay had been eight days at Toulon, before he dared to touch upon the subject. When at length he ventured to do so, it was a long time before he could make Monsieur d'Origny comprehend what he meant, and when he succeeded in this, the intendant came very near having him thrown out of the window. This was the cause of d'Origny's ill-humor, when the convicts arrived from Toulouse, for the scene had just taken place.

Rabaut, on his side, hesitated to go to Toulon. He was sure he might rely upon the intendant, but Charnay might reach him through others.

He was continuing his journey, however, when he found letters at the house of a friend on the road, which summoned him to Toulouse. He accordingly proceeded thither without delay, for grave matters claimed his attention. He was there while the news of his arrest was spreading throughout the province; it was from thence that he arrived, when we saw him make his appearance in the house of Reboul.

XXVI.

RABAUT'S ADMONITION, ADVICE AND WARNING.

Need we describe the joy of his friends? Their plans have showed clearly enough how dear he was to them.

And yet this joy was, in many of them, not altogether unclouded. The most ardent, who had longed for the moment when the yoke should be thrown off, foresaw, not without reason, that his deliverance would change the disposition of the greater number. They had risen for him; he being safe, the scrupulous, and the moderate, would again begin to preach endurance. His air, moreover, his first words to Reboul, and his well-known way of thinking, all announced that he would be the first to preach it.

Reboul had obeyed, but only in part. He had not put back the sword into the scabbard; he had only placed it upon the table.

"My friends," said the minister, "what have I heard! Plans of insurrection! plans of war!"

"For you," said Reboul.

"For me, I know. I was proud of it,—too proud, perhaps. The news of my misfortune did, in a few days, what years of suffering had not been able to effect. What a reward, my friends, for the little that I have been permitted to do for you and your cause! How I should,—you think so, for I read it in your eyes,—how I should hasten to enter into these plans of which I was the occasion! But you see, it is not I who prevent it. It is God. He permitted you to arm yourselves for me, and at the moment when you were about to put your hand to the work, behold I appear! Do you not believe that

it was he who sent me? And if he sent me, who shall dare to say that it was not in order to arrest your movements!—But, Reboul.—what is the matter?"

Reboul took his seat, dejectedly.

"It is over," he murmured, "it is all over. Slaves we have lived, slaves we must die."

"And free we shall rise again, Reboul.—Do you forget that?"

But others forgot it as well. When liberty has been foreseen.—even across seas of blood,—it is not easy to return in a moment to the humility of the slave, and the resignation of the Christian.

"Reboul is right," said a voice.

"He is right," repeated five or six others. "Always to suffer,—always to wait,—we do not wish to do this."

"We will not!" was then exclaimed by nearly all.

But Rabaut, who was leaning over the old man, had raised himself at these last words. He had drawn a step or two back, with his arms crossed. Their murmurs had scarce ceased before they began to repent.

"You *will* not?" he said. "As you choose. Go. But remember one thing,—you go without my benediction."

They cast down their eyes.

"Forgive us," said some of them immediately.

"Forgive you!" he resumed in a milder tone. "It is not me against whom you have offended. If you wish the pardon of God, well and good. If you wish to ask for it, I am ready. *We will not!* What are we, poor worms, to say, *We will not!* Since when is God no longer the only one who wills,—who *can* will? For even if you had the right, my friends, have you the power? I did not wish to begin by speaking to you of the obstacles to be overcome; it was necessary that you

should first be moved by a nobler, more Christian motive. But unless you count upon meeting with miracles, these obstacles are absolutely insurmountable. You hope to raise the province? Undeceive yourselves. The province is not now what it formerly was. Indifference, love for the good things of life, and—to speak frankly,—fear besides, have penetrated everywhere. Save upon your mountains, the most zealous would tremble. Conquerors, what means would you have of profiting by your successes? Conquered, you would be crushed. Your brethren would pity you, would perhaps admire you; but as to joining you,—they would not, and could not. No, my friends,—do not delude yourselves. The moment is not yet come. Will it come? God alone knows; but it is not for us to hasten it otherwise than by our prayers."

XXVII.

FRIENDLY CHAT.

Their irritation was past, but discouragement might easily take its place. And accordingly Rabaut did not leave the subject until he had restored to them, as he knew so well how to do, that serenity of mind, which alone is true courage and true resignation. He raised them by faith, above the miseries as well as the joys of this world. He left them no illusions, but also none of those human passions which need the support of illusions. The past was dark; the future darker still; but they placed their trust in God, the great comforter of those who suffer.

Then he related to them his visit to Aigues-Mortes, his capture and his deliverance. They prayed; and separated. It had been agreed to spread through all the province, the news

of his return, and of the abandonment of all ideas of insurrection.

An hour later a simple repast was served upon the same table which had held the Bible and the sword. Rabaut, his guest, and two friends took their seats around it.

"Well, Monsieur le pasteur," said Reboul, "you are just from Toulouse. How are matters going on there?"

"Badly,—very badly."

"So there is no more hope?"

"None, I think."

"Poor Calas!"

"Poor Rochette!"

"We have almost forgotten them, during the last few days."

"To think only of me."

"Ah! that is because you,—you see—"

"Let us say no more of it, Reboul.—My brave friends!"

He pressed his hand, and they were silent for a moment.

"You thought of me," he resumed; "well, I too was thinking of you. Do you know what one of the things was, which pursued me during that interminable hour at Aigues-Mortes? It was the thought of the happiness which, after dangerous and fatiguing journeys, I had so often enjoyed in the hospitable houses where I passed the night."

"And mine was one of them, was it not?"

"Can you ask that, Reboul!"

"But it is a very sad house now. My poor children! If you had at least seen them at Toulon! For they are there, I think;—they must have arrived. How much good you would have done them!"

"Courage, Reboul, God is with them."

"And with us—when you are here."

"When I am here! Why not always?"

"You see that we were going to behave very foolishly."

They talked of other things. They were at no loss for subjects. Besides their perils and sufferings, there were all the details of the internal administration which we have seen restored by Antoine Court, and which at this time had arrived at a degree of regularity which would have been admired during a period of perfect tranquillity. Each church had its consistory, the severe guardian of its discipline and morals. Without this consistory, it would have ceased to belong to the number of the churches. Thus ran a decree in 1723: "Since, in cities and places where there are no elders, there have arisen scandals and irregularities, it has been decided that there shall be appointed a number without delay; and where this is not done, or if there is a refusal to comply on the part of the faithful, they will not receive pastoral visits, *nor receive notice of the assemblies.*" Shall we call this severe? Let us call it sublime, and we shall be nearer the truth. Appoint elders, or you are not invited to the assemblies,—which lead directly to death and to the galleys. Never has the language of honor spoken more nobly with less pretension and fewer words.

The consistories had much to do. Civil arrangements, finances, alms, superintendence of morals, organization and guards of the assemblies,—such were their principal offices. It was a State within a State, but a state which existed only upon condition of being invisible. The simplest affair must necessarily be complicated with endless precautions.

And accordingly, Reboul and his guests, all three of them elders of the consistory of the place, had a thousand things to ask the pastor. If the intendant of the province had happened to hear their conversation, he would have been not a little surprised at the extent of the field which their zeal had been able

to open in the midst of so many edicts, so many arrests, and such constant watching.

"You do not speak of your son," said Reboul. "Shall I die without having seen him once more,—without having heard him preach?"

"I hope not indeed. His studies are about to close. You will see him, with God's will, in the spring."

"As minister?"

"No, but about to become so. We shall ordain him in France. A glorious day for me, Reboul!"

"And for the Church. Who will ordain him?"

"Can you ask that?"

"I see. God be with him,—and with you!"

They rejoiced throughout the province to hear of the return of the younger Rabaut, who had studied, as we said, at the seminary of Lausanne. As a child, he had already shared the fatigues and dangers of his father. Although he had been absent for ten years, his precocious talents were called to mind, and they loved to think of these as ripened by age and study.

XXXIII.

CAPTURE OF ROCHETTE.

When they had finished supper, the minister resumed,

"You wish me to tell you what is doing at Toulouse—"

"Pardon," interrupted Reboul. "We have heard things only by halves, and we are not even sure that the little we know is true. Will you have the kindness to begin a little farther back?"

"Willingly. I will go back, if you choose, to the arrest of pastor Rochette. You knew him, did you not?"

"Slightly; but very well by reputation."

"He deserved it. He was,—I can no longer say he *is*,—he was one of the most devoted and the most gifted among us. At first, he served the churches of Agenois, then those of Querey. At last, in our last synod, the third of June of this year, we assigned him the district of Montalbanais. I saw him for the last time at that assembly, where he performed the office of secretary.

"His three months' ministry was enough to give him a happy and remarkable influence in this new field of labor. His powers seemed to increase in proportion to the necessities of the Church. He was everywhere, he accomplished everything. A few days before his capture, I learned that he was about to hold, in a few weeks, more than twenty different meetings.

"He arrived on the thirteenth of September at Caussade, and was sent for from the country to baptize a child. His usual guide, Viala, went to examine the road, and was returning towards midnight with a man of the neighborhood, when they were met by a patrol of the citizen guard, and becoming confused, said they were waiting for some one, that they were going to Montauban. The pastor, who was coming to meet them, was also questioned, and replied, as was true, that he was going to Saint Antonin. This contradiction appeared suspicious, and they were all three arrested.

"At Caussade they were again questioned. He might have told a falsehood, but he would not save himself by lying. He told his name.

"The mayor and court were alarmed at their capture. Two of them, formerly Protestants, wished him to be released quietly; the rest, although Catholics, did not care to give him up to the parliament. It was tacitly agreed that he should be allowed to escape the following night.

"Suddenly, a rumor was spread abroad that the Protestants of the neighborhood would soon be up in arms to deliver their pastor. The tocsin was sounded,—all armed themselves in haste. Troops perambulated the streets. They went so far as to raise the white cross, with its memories of the League and of Saint Bartholomew. The tocsin was also rung for four or five leagues around. The Catholics hastened from all quarters. They came to protect Caussade against the fury of the Protestants.

"The Protestants, however, did not make their appearance. No one asserted having seen even four of them together,—still less having seen a single one armed; and, in fact, not the slightest trace could be found of this pretended plan of invasion. But, in the meantime, the court had been obliged to put their prisoner in a safe place. All Caussade mounted guard around his prison. Our friend was lost.

"And he was not to be the only one.

"Horrible threats had been uttered against us. Some Protestants had been attacked in their houses; some had even been obliged to oppose force to force. Blood had not yet flowed, but one blow was all that was necessary to cause a massacre.

"Whilst the Protestants of Caussade barricaded themselves in their houses, a report was spread at Montauban that they were going to be slaughtered, that they were perhaps already slaughtered. Three brothers, glass-makers, of the county of Foix, were in this city. They learned the arrest of the pastor and the exasperation of the Catholics. They set out for Caussade, armed with their fowling pieces. What were they going to do there? They did not know; one thing is certain, they could not think of attacking, those three alone, with their fowling pieces, a town all filled with soldiers, and no one could

find that they had attempted to procure companions on th way. They were seen in the distance approaching. They were attacked and disarmed, and are now at Toulouse, as you know, under a capital accusation. They rebelled, say their enemies, and made armed resistance; and the parliament is ready to pronounce accordingly."

"But their friends?" said Reboul. "For they must have friends. They have friends—"

"Many friends, who have moved heaven and earth to aid them. It was on their account that I have just been to Toulouse, where I was already two months ago. I directed all the steps myself. I plead—I caused others to plead. In vain! They will perish. As for the pastor, we dare not dream of obtaining anything from the judges. The law is explicit; even if they wished to save him—which is by no means the case—they could not. At farthest, we may hope to obtain his execution on the gallows instead of the wheel.

"We were accordingly obliged to make our appeal in higher quarters. The governor, the ministers, the king have been harassed with our petitions. I wrote myself to the Duke de Richelieu, the Duke de Fitz James, and even to Madame Adélaïde, the eldest daughter of the king. We were informed that she had once or twice showed some pity for us. I said to her, in favor of our unfortunate friend, all that I could imagine most likely to touch her heart, without wounding her piety, which is not of the most enlightened kind. No answer. Did she even receive my letter? Monsieur Court was not able to find out. In the meantime, the trial goes on. Perhaps the sentence is already drawn up."

"As yours would be," interrupted Reboul, "if you had remained in their hands. But we would have torn it, or we would have left our heads in their hands."

"Reboul, for God's sake, talk no more of these plans."

"Yes, you are right. We will talk no more of them."

He sighed. The Christian had become resigned, but the Camisard was constantly starting up again.

XXIX.

ARREST OF THE CALAS FAMILY.—VAIN ATTEMPTS TO SAVE THEM.

"I have still the beginning of the Calas trial to relate," resumed the minister. "In the other case, we had against us only inquisitous laws and inexorable judges; in this, our enemies have already heaped together all the follies and all the horrors of fanaticism.

"You knew the Calas. The father was universally esteemed, and the mother was amiable and pious, but the children had not all proved worthy of their instructions. The third son, Louis, had become a Catholic; the eldest, Mark-Antony, led a detestable life—idle, dissipated, gloomy, incapable of taking pleasure in anything, even in the dissipations by which he sought to distract his thoughts. He had been very intimate with Bruyn, he whom you called my Judas, and who has since so heartily repented his infamy of a moment. But the other was condemned to fall from sin to sin, until he reached the bosom of the abyss, into which he is going to drag his father.

"It was the thirteenth of October. I had been at Toulouse for several days, quite absorbed by Rochette and the three brothers Grenier. I had seen the Calas during the day. The father had requested me to see his son, and to join my efforts to his, to induce him to alter his course. I had been conducted to his chamber, where I had found him a man brutalized by wine and dissipation, deaf to exhortations and prayers—to the

voice of religion as well as that of nature. I had even gone away without again seeing the father, so certain did it seem to me that there was nothing more for him to hope. Did the unhappy man hear more of what I said to him than he appeared to do? Did I contribute, by showing him the horror of his situation, to make him determine upon escaping from it by suicide? Perhaps so. In a passionate soul, everything turns to poison.

"In the evening, happening to pass through the same street, I heard cries. I hastened forward, but as a number of persons had already stopped before the door, prudence obliged me to remain at some distance. I am always, as you know, like an informer in an enemy's country.

"The door was half opened, and the crowd recoiled with terror. Behind this door, at the entrance of the shop, a man was hanging. I recognized Mark-Antony. At the same moment, I perceived young Lavaysse, a friend of the family, who mounted upon the table and cut the rope, while others received the body in their arms. The watch arrived and repulsed the crowd. The family, with several neighbors remained alone in the shop, endeavoring in vain to restore Mark-Antony to life.

"In the meantime, two sheriffs had arrived—Lisle de Brive and David de Baudrigne—the latter well known on account of his hatred against us. And yet they were there for more than a quarter of an hour, without having dreamed, either of them, of suspecting or looking for a crime. It was the same with the crowd. No one near me had yet uttered a word of dissent from the universal opinion that the unhappy man had hung himself.

"The sheriffs were going away; they had not even drawn up a process-verbal. Suddenly a voice cried from the midst of the crowd, that Calas was to have abjured in a short time—that

he had been assassinated, and that the assassin was his father. One of the sheriffs shrugged his shoulders and went on his way; the other, David, stopped, then ran after his companion and brought him back, thus, in an instant, giving an alarming color to the suspicion just disseminated. Immediately, in spite of the remonstrances of his colleague, he had the whole family arrested, including Lavaysse and a servant-maid. They were conducted to the town hall, whither the body was also carried, and, contrary to all rule, it was only then that the process-verbal was drawn up.

"I had remained among the crowd, and had followed, not without alarm, the frightful progress of an opinion which had at first appeared simply absurd. Every moment, I heard new details in regard to the pretended conversion of Mark-Antony, and his intention to abjure, and his *martyrdom*, for they had already begun to give this name to his death. At the end of an hour, any appearance of dissent from the opinion of the multitude would have been dangerous.

"I retreated, however, more afflicted at this hereditary fanaticism, than seriously uneasy in regard to the fate of the Calas. The examination, I thought, partial, as there was reason to fear it would be, would immediately establish their innocence.

"I had counted without the clergy.

"It is the custom in the Roman church, that in case of a grave crime whose authors are unknown, the faithful must be solemnly summoned, upon penalty of excommunication, to come forward and depose all that they know or suspect in regard to the affair in question. This summons, generally accompanied by details intended to facilitate discovery, is what they call a *monitory*.

"They hastened accordingly, to put forth one. This piece,

signed by the vicar-general, differed so widely from the usual forms, that I could not help thinking at first, that it was altered or perhaps spurious. I knew the hatred of the priests, but I had fancied them more skilful in concealing it.

"They began by taking for an admitted and uncontrovertible fact, that which ought to have been proved before anything else, namely, that the death of Calas was the result of a crime.

"This settled, without openly naming the father, they arranged their questions in such a manner, that the answers unavoidably turned towards him.

"Finally, all articles pre-supposing the crime, and all information irrelevant to these articles, being according to the ordinary course of justice excluded from the judicial examination, the door was shut to all evidence tending to clear the prisoners.

"As if this barrier set up beforehand between the judges and the truth, was not sufficient, it soon seemed as if the latter wished to condemn themselves not to receive it, even if it should force the barrier, and present itself plainly to their minds.

"The *monitory* had taken it for granted that Calas came to his death by assassination. The sheriffs go a step farther; they take it upon them to assert that Calas died a Catholic, or at least, on the point of becoming one. They order, consequently, that the body shall be provisionally interred *in holy ground*, and, in order to make the thing more solemn, the cemetery of Saint-Etienne, the cathedral of Toulouse, was selected.

"The curé objected. The Catholicity of the deceased, he said, was far from being proved. In spite of the *monitory*, no priest had yet asserted that Mark-Antony had ever made overtures to him upon the subject of his plans of abjuration. And in what a false position would they find themselves, if, after

these Catholic obsequies, they should discover certainly, that the defunct had died a Protestant; if, especially, after having rendered him all the honors refused by the Church to suicides, they should be forced to admit that he had died by his own hand! But this was precisely what their hatred had sworn not to admit. They passed it by, and it was decided that the interment should take place.

"The affair was thus conducted. Fifty priests, with tapers, banners, in short, with all the apparatus of a solemn burial,—came to take the body to the hôtel-de-ville. An immense crowd followed them. The body was exhibited in the church. Holy water rained upon the coffin. The people could doubt no longer; Calas died a Catholic; Calas died a martyr to his faith.

"And on the next day they began to say masses for the repose of his soul. Churches, convents, and brotherhoods, were animated by a holy emulation. The white penitents, whom Calas, it was said, had intended to join immediately after his abjuration, particularly distinguished themselves. I was present at this abominable farce, which was the certain prelude to a terrible drama. The church was hung, not with black, but white. Must not all eyes be made to see that this was a fête day, that the deceased had triumphantly entered into heaven! In the centre was a magnificent funeral decoration; a skeleton stood upon its summit. In its right hand was a palm,—the symbol of martyrdom; in the other a paper, upon which might be read in large letters: *Abjuration of heresy.* All the convents and brotherhoods in the neighborhood, sent deputies to this lugubrious spectacle. The whole province was moved. The imagination of the people was excited; they prayed, wept, and raved; the condemnation of our poor friends might be read on every countenance.

"And yet, what had this man been, of whom they now strove to make a martyr, almost a saint? The whole city had been aware of his irregularities; everybody had sympathized with his father. Had some reformation been noticed latterly in his habits? No. What he had been for years he had remained to the end. The neighbors could prove this. The evening before his death he had passed in a gambling house; he had returned home, as usual, taciturn, and staggering. So that not only was there nothing to prove that he had dreamed of becoming a Catholic, but this intention, if real, had been unaccompanied by the slightest alteration in his conduct. A libertine he had lived, and a libertine he died.

"But hatred is not very scrupulous; the Roman Church, moreover, has never been very dainty in the choice of her heroes. What matters what Calas had been, provided his death furnished an opportunity for exciting the people, destroying a few Huguenots, and bringing up afresh some of the calumnies with which they have persecuted us for two hundred years past? For not content with declaiming against this murder, they assert that we have a secret law among us, ordering parents to put to death such of their children as wish to become Catholics. Where have they discovered,—I will not say this law, since they pretend that we keep it concealed,—but any acts which appears to be the consequences of any such law? Their proselytes have torn from us enough of our children and youth; how many have been assassinated in the meantime? Even if it should be proved that Mark-Antony died by the hand of his father, it would still be an isolated fact, neither our Church nor ourselves ought to be identified with it. But no. There will soon be no Roman Catholic in Toulouse, who will not speak of, and believe in this bloody law, which has been attributed to us, as if he had read it, or

heard us preach it. I was forced to take up my pen to endeavor to destroy, at least in some minds, these odious prejudices. A pamphlet which I have just finished, is being secretly printed at Toulouse. Will it do any good? I dare not hope for much. Some are too blind to learn; others are too far advanced to retreat.

"We had, however, one moment of hope. The sheriffs, having on the eighteenth of November ordered that Calas, his wife, and his son Pierre should be put to the question, the accused appealed, and the parliament on the fifth of December annulled the decree of the sheriffs. At the same time it revoked the affair, and ordered a more accurate examination.

"We were encouraged, but only for a short time. They allowed the former proceedings to stand, roughly and partially prepared as they were; and shortly afterwards ordered a renewed publication of the *monitory*. Thus the work of the sheriffs was continued by the parliament. There was the same false foundation, the same irregularity in the proceedings, and the same bitterness against the accused and against us.

"It is true that we have more friends than would be believed, but the greater part of them dare not speak. The state of things now at Toulouse is that which is generally met with only at the commencement of revolutions; it is the populace, the violent portion of the community, who lead public opinion. Those who, on other occasions, have been most inclined to despise the judgment of the mass, are apparently the most inclined at present to think that the voice of the people is the voice of God. 'You are all of you Calas!' said one of our enemies to the councillor De la Salle, the only one who has not followed the torrents. 'And you,' replied Monsieur de la Salle, 'are all of you populace.'

"This is the position of affairs, my friends. The Calas are in secret confinement. All communication with them is impossible. Receiving no directions, ignorant of all that the examining judges think proper to conceal from them, they fall into some fresh snare at every question. Pressed by questions upon insignificant points, which none of them had dreamed of impressing upon their minds, they do not always precisely agree; and these contradictions, collected and amplified, are to swell the mass of facts beneath which it is purposed to crush them.

"I hope for nothing more, but I shall struggle to the last. If their blood must flow, I wish at least that it shall not flow in vain. Who knows whether their death may not be designed by God to be one of the conditions of our deliverance?"

XXX.

THE WOLF SCENTS HIS PREY.

It was nearly midnight, and Rabaut was to set out before day-break. The two friends took their departure, and the pastor retired to his chamber.

This chamber, situated on the second floor, had but one window, looking out on a little garden. It was, moreover, tolerably well provided with all the means of escape of which the place admitted. At the window, a rope ladder was always rolled up behind the inside shutter. Within a closet, was a secret door leading to the cellar or the garret, according to circumstances; and behind the bed, in case the house should be at the same time entered and surrounded, was a last refuge. It was a long, low hiding place, of which the entrance, on a level with the floor of the room, was cleverly concealed in one

of the lower panels. There, extended within the wall, and breathing through a crevice, the concealed person might still for a day or two defy the search of the enemy.

Rabaut occupied himself, before retiring to his bed, in writing down his plan for the next day. He had to see a great number of people and arrange much business, and as he was anxious to return as soon as possible to Toulouse, he wished to order everything so that he need not lose a step or a moment.

It was cold. The solitude of the house, the uninhabited chamber, and the death-like silence of the night, all contributed to add to the chill which affects the limbs, that other chill which penetrates the heart.

Rabaut had finished, but he still kept his place. He felt that vague oppression which keeps one nailed to his seat, as if he feared the sound which he would make in moving. He sat motionless, and listened to the moaning of the wind, to the rustling of the dry leaves which it whirled about the garden, and to the pendulum of the old clock which he heard below him in the kitchen, and whose regular ticking contrasted strangely with the fantastic sounds without.

For some moments, it had seemed to him that he heard something which was neither the sound of the wind nor that of the leaves. This sound, which came from the garden, had continued once between two gusts of wind; but then it had suddenly ceased, as if perceiving that it might betray itself, and that it must await a new approach of the blast.

Midnight struck, and immediately, as if at a given signal, the noise re-commenced as if it were no longer to be concealed. There was no more doubt. There were steps, voices. Rabaut sprang to the window. He looked through a small opening made in the shutter, but perceived nothing. The

night was dark. He could scarcely perceive the summits of a few trees, whose leafless branches were visible against the cloudy sky. But the steps and voices approached.

At the same moment, the front door was violently shaken. That of the chamber was half opened, and Reboul appeared. "Fly or conceal yourself!" he exclaimed, and then hastened down. But Rabaut no longer had the choice. The garden was illuminated, and he could distinctly perceive soldiers and armed peasants. It was impossible to fly, but it was necessary that they should believe he had flown. He opened the door of the secret staircase, left it open, and then concealed himself in the hiding place already mentioned.

Here, he no longer heard anything save a confused noise. He felt from the trembling of the wall that they were beating in the door. Then the tumult took possession of the house. The staircase shook beneath heavy steps, and the butt ends of muskets rung against the floors.

The door of the chamber was at length violently burst open. Several persons rushed in at the same time.

"Here we are! Come!" cried a voice.

And this voice Rabaut now recognized. It was the voice of Aigues-Mortes,—the voice of Father Charnay.

XXXI.

CHARNAY'S PLAN.

Repulsed at Toulon, Charnay had returned furious, to Pont-de-Montvert, his head-quarters, as inspector of the missions of Languedoc. He had heard, but only that very evening, of the meeting which was to take place at the house of Reboul. Not being able, without attracting attention, to gather together in

so short a time enough soldiers to capture forty or fifty men, he had resolved to wait until at least half them had taken their departure. But, in the meantime, he was informed that a rider had been seen to approach the town, that the same man had been met a short time after in the street approaching the house of Reboul on foot. There could be no doubt, it was a pastor.

Charnay immediately changed his plan. He knew that in the assemblies the watchword was always to aid the pastor's escape. He accordingly decided to leave the assembly in peace, for even if it were reduced to a few men, they would still perhaps find some means of hiding his prey, and thus tearing it once more from his grasp. Thus he cared not if all escaped provided the minister were taken.

It had been observed that he alone wore a cloak. It would accordingly, in spite of the darkness of the night, be easy to recognize him as he came out, and to follow and seize him. Two men crouched in the shadow a few steps from the door, had awaited him in vain, from which it was concluded, as had at first appeared probable, that he would pass the night in the house.

Towards eleven o'clock, some of Charnay's most trusty followers had slipped one by one into the garden; others, drawn up in the street, were ready to approach at the first signal. Charnay had decided, however, that they should wait until midnight. The pastor will have retired to bed, he thought, and that will make the affair easier.

XXXII.

FOILED AGAIN.

"Here we are!" he cried, accordingly, springing into this chamber, which the bed, the lighted lamp, and the chair placed before the table, indicated to him as the object of his search.

But he had scarcely crossed the threshold, before he stopped, amazed and breathless.

"No one here! No one!"

Then immediately perceiving the concealed staircase; "Good!" he resumed; "we have him; he cannot possibly have gone out. He is gone either up or down the steps."

Some of the men went up,—others headed by the abbé descended the stairs.

In a few minutes they had all returned. No one had been found in the garret, no one either in the cellar,—but it had been observed that a door in the latter, leading to the garden, was unbolted. But the sentinels on the outside had watched this door, and declared that it had not been opened.

Now this bolt had been remembered by Reboul, who had found time to hasten and draw it, on the first alarm, in order that it might be thought that Rabaut had escaped by that way. The ruse had succeeded. In spite of the assertion of the sentinels, they began to believe that he must have escaped.

Charnay was seated, in a terrible state of agitation, upon the chair, where Rabaut had so lately been writing his notes. With his hand clenched, his arm extended upon the table, and his eye fixed upon the wall, he scarcely heeded the reports which had been brought him. What cared he for the details? The result remained the same. His plan had failed; he could

only fret silently against the barrier which God had once more raised up against the attempts of his hatred.

From time to time he threw off his stupor, and his eyes beamed with a remnant of hope.

"Have you been upon the roof?"

"Yes, my Father."

He was again silent.

"Have you searched everywhere?"

"Yes, my Father."

Again silent.

"Have you sounded the walls?"

"Yes, my Father."

"Everywhere?"

"Everywhere.—Ah! not in this room—"

In an instant he rose, and with a stick, knocked short and violent blows wherever he could reach. But the walls kept their secret. He had struck too high, for the hiding-place, it will be remembered, was on a level with the floor. Besides, the panel which formed its entrance, was supported and lined, so as not to return a more hollow sound, upon being struck, than the others.

The Jesuit seated himself once more.

"I am cold," he said; "let a fire be kindled."

"Here?" said one of the men.

"Here.—Ah! ha!"

A new idea had struck him. Suppose the minister should be in the chimney? It was through the chimney that the pastor Lafage, in the environs of Monoblet, in 1754, had endeavored to escape. A ball shattered his arm just as he gained the roof. Three days afterwards, he was hung at Montpellier.

Charnay hastened, accordingly, to send two men upon the

roof. He arranged the wood himself; he kindled the fire with his own hands. But the men returned alone. Nothing had come out of the chimney—save the smoke.

Suddenly he remembered Reboul. He had another victim, if he could not find the pastor. According to the edicts, Reboul must go the galleys, and his house be razed to the ground. The same thing had happened in 1754, to the Protestant Novis, for having given an asylum to Lafage.

"Let him be brought to me," said Charnay; "perhaps I may get something from him."

He did not hope this, however, for the old man's resolute character was well known. He wished to see. Certain animals of prey enjoy playing with their victims.

"Well," he said to him, "so he has escaped?"

"I have already thanked God for it, Monsieur."

"You shall thank him at the galleys. Do not forget,—you will have plenty of time."

"Does Monsieur think I shall remain there long?"

"For life, may it please you! You do not know the edict?"

"Perfectly well. But it strikes me rather late. I am eighty-three years old. *For life*, at that age—"

"Your goods will be confiscated."

"What need have I of them? I am going to the galleys, and my heirs are already there."

"Your house will be destroyed."

"*If our earthly tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, eternal in—*"

"Hold your tongue."

"You wish Saint-Paul to hold his tongue?"

"Hold your tongue.—Where is he?"

"Who?"

"The minister."

"If I knew, you may well imagine that I should not tell you."

"You do not know where he is?"

"I do not."

He said this with the greater assurance, because he did not know, in fact, whether Rabaut had concealed himself or succeeded in escaping.

"But at any rate," said Charnay, in a much gentler tone, "could you not give us a few indications? We should then willingly forget that he was in your house."

"Yes, but I—I should not forget that I had committed an infamous crime. Do you not think that would be worse than your galleys?"

"You are determined to go there?"

"I am determined to die as I have lived, be it here or at Toulon. But yes—you are right. I am determined to go there. It will be sweet for me to be there, since I shall be there first for my faith, then for Monsieur Rabaut."

"For whom?" shrieked Charnay.

But he had heard only too well. His eyes seemed starting from their sockets. He threw himself upon Reboul, and convulsively shook his arm.

"Rabaut!" he cried. "It was Rabaut!"

"Why, certainly," said the Cevenol, quietly. "Did you not know it?"

In fact, Charnay had not even suspected it. He believed Rabaut at Toulouse, or in its neighborhood; nothing had made him imagine that he had followed him so closely to the Cevennes. Too happy at the prospect of capturing any pastor, he had not thought of asking who it was that he had failed in discovering. Moreover, if Reboul had thought that he did not know, he would have taken good care not to tell him.

XXXIII.

CAMISARD COURAGE.—JESUIT COWARDICE.

His fury was now boundless. He reproached himself openly for having laid his plans so badly. He sent for his soldiers and the peasants who had accompanied him; he inquired of them in a terrible voice, new details, to which he paid no attention when given. He went up into the garret, descended to the cellar, and searched every corner himself.

In the midst of this excitement, he had once more forgotten old Reboul. The latter had remained where he was, under the guard of two soldiers, who did not dare to approach Charnay in order to ask his commands. In the meantime, they conversed with Reboul. These men appeared dissatisfied with the part given them to be played in the province. "French soldiers," they said, "might have something better to do, just now, than to aid the purveyors of the scaffolds." They would have preferred, upon the whole, serving under Marshal Soubise, beaten and lampooned as he was, to conquering under a Jesuit, and making prisoners of men eighty-three years of age.

"And you do not know where he is?" resumed the priest suddenly, returning and planting himself before him.

"I do not," was Reboul's reply.

"Ah! you do not know, eh? Ah! you do not choose to speak! Wait, wait. We have unclosed the teeth of many a more obstinate fellow than you!"

"Of cowards!".

"For the last time—will you speak?"

Reboul shrugged his shoulders.

In an instant, Charnay had tied him with the rope-ladder to

the chair. Then, tearing off his shoes, he drew him before the fire.

The soldiers did not disguise their horror. Charnay heated the pincers. Thus had Monsieur de Machault done, it will be remembered, in order to drag a confession from Damiens.

Reboul grew pale. He moved his lips in prayer.

"You are praying, eh?" said Charnay, as he arranged the coals.

"The abbé Chayla prayed also."

"When?"

"When we killed him, Monsieur l'Abbé, for having done to some of our people what you are now going to do to me."

"And do you intend—to—perhaps to—frighten me?"

"It would be no difficult matter, I think. You are quite agitated already."

"I?"

"But, reassure yourself. We no longer assassinate any one. When vengeance is certain, why should we hasten it?"

"Vengeance! What vengeance?"

"Do you believe in God, Monsieur?"

"Hold your tongue, wretch!"

"Well, do not ask me, then, what we depend upon. Your pincers are red-hot, Monsieur l'Abbé."

Charnay took them.

In the meantime, Rabaut saw and heard all. Through the same crevice which admitted the air, he perceived, beneath the bed, the fire, with Charnay stooping down before it, and the bare feet of the unhappy Cevenol. His resolution was taken. He would not allow the sacrifice to be accomplished. At the first groan of the victim, he would cry to the executioner to stop, and would give himself up to him.

But the executioner hesitated. Several times he had taken

up the pincers, and each time, as if not finding them hot enough, he had put them again in the fire. His tone, each moment more threatening, ill-concealed his embarrassment. He was evidently agitated. By pity? Perhaps so, for it was the first time, we must say, that he was going to torture any one with his own hand; but it was also by the thought of the dangers which he ran the risk of bringing upon himself. On the one hand, the remembrance of Chayla; on the other, the limits of his authority as inspector, which by no means included the infliction of torture, still less the infliction of it by his own hand. Messieurs of the parliament had always showed themselves very tenacious of this right; and it was not now politic for the Jesuits to fall out with them on account of an unnecessary usurpation.

Rabaut—with one hand on the bolt, and the other pressed upon his heart, as if to stifle the sound of its violent throbbing—Rabaut did not lose sight of him. His courage and strength were wearing out with this terrible suspense. He was in the habit of risking his life, but to see it suspended, as it were, upon a thread—a thread which was at the mercy of a madman who might break it when he liked—was more than he could endure. He was suffocating, and was forced to make a powerful effort to prevent himself from bursting open his hiding-place, if it were but in order to breathe.

Suddenly there was a great noise. Reboul's silence and immovability had conquered. Charnay had not dared to do more than threaten; so he rose, and dashed down the instrument of torture, as if to punish it for its uselessness. Then he rushed from the apartment, and his steps tremulous with rage, were heard descending the stairs.

A few moments afterwards, his guards led away the Cevenol.

In a few days, his workmen tore down the house. The hiding-place was found, but it was empty.

And while they demolished the house, its owner arrived at the bagnio, where his two grand-sons awaited him.

XXXIV.

FALBAIRE'S DRAMA.

While the galleys were receiving new guests, and death was hovering over the prisoners of Toulouse, the cause of toleration was, in certain circles, making great and curious progress.

Curious, in truth, for upon nothing was the levity of the age more oddly impressed.

It had become the fashion to pity the Protestants, but no one thought of putting an end to their sufferings,—no one, at least, among those who had in their hands the power to aid them.

There are people who can write the most touching things about benevolence, and who are themselves, anything but benevolent. Is this hypocrisy? Sometimes; but most frequently it is only thoughtlessness. Talk to them of poverty; they are all sympathizing and all tearful. Speak to them of the poor, and for the poor, and they will almost look astonished that there are such.

This was the feeling, an hundred years ago, for the brave relics of French Protestantism. The greater the contrast between their sufferings and the refinements of the age, the more people were inclined to be moved by them only as by a story of by-gone days. Their martyrs were pitied, but as those of the early Christians were; or at most, as those of China and Japan. Sometimes, as has been perceived, there was even an actual error in regard to the epoch of their sufferings. The

author of the *Virtuous Criminal*, imagined that he brought forward a fact already long past. His hero, he fancied, could not have been dead less than twenty or thirty years. Marmontel, who had related the story to him, and suggested the idea of dramatizing it, was of the same opinion.

And yet this piece, which the hero himself, as we saw, looked upon as very commonplace, had been successful in Paris. Upon the whole, it might be taken as one of the most favorable specimens of that illegitimate style which Diderot had brought into fashion,—and which has been so well characterized by the name of the *citizen drama;* a false style, if there ever was one, since the formality of the classic drama had been retained, while choosing the hero from a less-elevated rank, in which the solemnity of the ancient tone was without excuse. Add to this, exaggerated sentiments, philosophized ideas, and a bombastic style, and you have what this worn-out age had the simplicity to consider as an improvement upon the noble defects of Racine's plays.

The *Virtuous Criminal* was accordingly the drama of the day. It was not yet performed, however; it appeared on the stage for the first time in 1768. Had the government opposed it? We have not been able to discover. However that may be, the effect of it was only the more general on that account. People would have been content with going to hear it,—while now it was read and re-read, and every one must know all its tirades. People were tolerant with the *Virtuous Criminal*, just as they were pious with the *Lent Sermons*, just as they loved the country, in the chimney-corner with Monsieur de Saint-Lambert, shepherds with Boucher and Watteau, astronomy with Monsieur de Fontenelle, ancient Rome with Monsieur de Florian, animals with Monsieur de Buffon, and all nature and truth, in short, with whoever excelled in spoiling them.

The piece had passed from Paris to Versailles, for it was Paris now which gave the tone to the court. The ladies had it upon their toilette tables,—the dandy marquis carried it in his pocket. It was destined to reach the king.

XXXV.

COURT THEATRICALS.

Nothing had been altered, during the past year, in the private life of the king. He became every day more difficult to amuse, every day the favorite bestowed more care and art upon this subject.

She had often enough sang the "Village Magician" for him; she thought now of declaiming the *Virtuous Criminal.*

These private theatricals, known by the name of "*Plays of the private apartments of the king,*" dated from 1747, the third year of Madame de Pompadour's reign. She had shone at Étioles, in the little theatre of Monsieur de Tournehem, her uncle, and she wished to have an opportunity of continuing her triumphs in the presence of the king.

She soon formed the *troop*, for it was considered humorous to take this name and keep it. The first who composed it, were the duke de Chartres, the dukes d'Ayen, de Nivernais, de Duras, and de Coigny, the compte de Maillebois, the marquis de Courtenvaux, and the marquis d'Entraigues. The ladies were less numerous. There were, besides the marquise, only the duchess de Brancas, the comtesse d'Estrades, and the comtesse de Marchais. There were only three of the whole number who could sing; Mme. de Pompadour, the duchess de Brancas, and the duke d'Ayen. Accordingly, the only operas they played at first, were little ones of three characters, such

as *Bacchus and Erigone*, *Ismène*, *Eglé*, etc. The *manager* was the duke de la Vallière, and the prompter, the abbé de la Garde, librarian and secretary of Madame de Pompadour.

They began with the *Enfant Prodigue* of Voltaire, but so secretly, that the author himself was unable to learn, for four or five days, how the piece had been received. There was no occasion, however, for him to be uneasy. The marquise had selected it; the marquise played a part in it. Louis XV. was enchanted. He even decided upon this occasion, that the audience might applaud in his presence, which had hitherto been interdicted, as well in private as in public. This was the first privilege granted to the private representations, and such a privilege in the eyes of the court, was immense.

The number of spectators, at first limited to five or six, was never very large; and several years passed before ladies were admitted. Their presence would have introduced etiquette, which the king wished most particularly to banish from these reunions; he wished that all might be able to take their places without distinction of rank, upon seats where the king alone should have a fixed and prominent place.

But if this simplicity was observed more or less on the part of the spectators, it was by no means the case with the actors. In 1750, we find them magnificently supplied with musicians and dancers. The ballet numbered as many as twenty persons, some belonging to the court,—among others, the marquis de Courtenvaux, *first dancer*,—and the remainder figure dancers chosen from the Opera company. Twenty chorus singers, male and female, were also added. In the orchestra, finally, there were twenty performers, of whom one-third were amateurs and the rest professional, and all of them distinguished artists.

This lasted several years. The king, although at last the

whole court was present, continued to imagine that he was a private assembly, just as Louis XIV. in the midst of the splendors of Marly, had fancied himself to the last, in a little bourgeois château, where he came to take refuge from the grandeur of Versailles.

One fine day, Louis XV. perceived that he was quite as ennuyé here as elsewhere, from which he concluded that these *private* representations now differed very little, save in name, from the grand court theatricals.

Thereupon, all that had gradually been added to the first organization, was gradually taken away. The troop again became what it had been at the commencement, a few names having been added, and a few taken away, just fitted, in short, to perform the *Virtuous Criminal*.

XXXVI.

THE TROOP OF MADAME LA MARQUISE.

The king had heard it spoken of (the piece, be it understood, not the hero, for he was the last man to concern himself about what might have become of him). He had agreed that it should be played before him at Bellevue, in one of those little soirées where he liked to see his court reduced to seven or eight persons, who were occupied with his comfort alone; amusing themselves only in order that he might be amused, laughing, talking, and eating only in order to make him laugh, and talk, and eat.

The piece, moreover, was admirably fitted to be played in private. There were not more than six characters; a single decoration, representing the sea, with one house on the right and another on the left, for the entrance and exit of the actors;

little or no action, but an abundance of monologue, and sentiment without end,—all, in short, that was best calculated to flatter the vanity of the actors, by offering to each in turn an opportunity of distinguishing himself.

It is true, that even had it been otherwise, willing subjects would not have been wanting. It was a grand thing at court to tread the boards of this little theatre, beside the marquise, and before the king. The least shadow of a part was solicited as a signal favor. "I once had," says Madame du Hausset, in her *Memoires*, "an appointment to solicit for one of my relations; but Madame de Pompadour did not like to ask any favor from Monsieur d'Argenson. Pressed by my family, who could not conceive any difficulty in my obtaining,—in the position which I occupied,*—a little appointment for a good soldier, I resolved to go and speak to the minister. He received me coolly enough. As I left him, Monsieur le marquis de V****, who had heard my request, followed me. 'You want an appointment,' he said to me. 'There is one vacant, which has been promised me, for one of my protégés. Will you make an exchange of services? I will give it up to you. Now I wish to be a sergeant—' And as I did not understand the pleasantry, he said, 'Listen. Tartuffe is to be played, and there is, as you know, the part of an officer of police. Have this part given to me, and the appointment is yours.' This was done. I had my appointment, and the marquis was as grateful to Madame as if she had made him a duke."

Thus, although you might be a marquis or a duke, you were lucky if at Bellevue you might call yourself Champagne or Frontin. Frontin was the classical name, and accordingly Fenouillot de Falbaire, the author of the *Virtuous Criminal*, had not failed to give it to one of his valets. The said valet

* Madame de Hausset was waiting-woman to Madame de Pompadour.

had eleven lines to recite; another only two; a third had only to run upon the stage once, in order to sustain a lady in a swoon. But the swooning lady was to be the marquise, and who would have ventured not to be enchanted with the honor of receiving her in his arms!

But she would have found it too tame to choose her actors only from among those who offered themselves. She did not care much to amuse herself with the piece, which for that matter was not very amusing; she must amuse herself with the actors themselves, or at least with some of them. It was a way of making her power felt by those whom she could not reach in any other way.

The Marquis de Narniers had returned to Versailles. The alteration which had taken place in his character and ideas had not escaped Madame de Pompadour before his departure for the south. Although still very far from being a religious, or even a very serious man, he was no longer the young scapegrace, who had always devoted soul and body to the absorbing worship of court favor. The bishop could not understand the indifference of his nephew to all that had hitherto been his very life; he looked upon it only as a new folly to be added to all his others. "You will ruin yourself!" he said, when he saw him for weeks together stay away from the toilette and the receptions of Madame de Pompadour.

XXXVII.

ENROLMENT OF THE MARQUIS.

"Ah, good morning, marquis!" she exclaimed, on his first visit to her after his return. "It has been a long time since anything has been seen of you."

"I have been in the South, Madame. I have had my regiment to attend to, besides various affairs at Aigues-Mortes, where I have the honor to govern in the name of the king."

"Very well; but you have been back several days, I believe?"

"Three or four, Madame."

"And you have not been to see me before!"

"Business—a visit to my uncle."

"Oh! I ask nothing of you. But yes, I do—a trifling service—"

"Madame!"

"You know—or perhaps you do not know—that we intend playing before the king, one of these days, a new piece, 'The *Victim's Criminal.*'"

"Before the king!"

"Before the king. You who, rumor says, have become a friend of the Protestants—"

"Madame!"

"This is, you see, a good work, and I am sure you will be happy to take part in it. Unfortunately, all the parts are already distributed. André is Monsieur de Marigny, my brother. The count is Monseigneur the Duke d'Orleans. Monsieur d'Alban is the Marquis d'Etraignes. Lisimon, André's father, is Monsieur the Duke d'Richelieu."

"Not so! Madame, not so!" exclaimed the duke, who was conversing at a little distance.

"No one is speaking to you," said the marquise, laughing.

"No, but I hear."

"You have promised."

"Not at all. I—a part! I—verses!"

"A mere nothing—a hundred!"

"One hundred and fifty, at least."

"You have counted them? Well, that is a proof that you have some idea of learning them."

"But—"

"Let us continue, Monsieur de Narniers. There remain three valets. Two are taken; you shall be the third, if you choose."

Monsieur de Narniers bowed.

"This evening," she continued, "we rehearse."

"This evening? But how—my part?"

"You are mute, my dear marquis!"

"Ah! mute?!

"Mute! The responsibility, as you see, is not weighty."

"What do you know about it, my sister?" said Marigny.

"But—"

"To be mute! On the contrary, that is very difficult. A woman ought to know that."

"Malicious!"

The marquis could only bow a second time. He was peremptorily enrolled in the Bellevue troop. All that remained for him to do was to order a valet's dress, made as becomingly as possible.

XXXVIII.

STATE OF THE FOREIGN RELATIONS OF FRANCE.—BROGLIE AND SOUBISE.

Nevertheless, in the midst of all these trifling occupations, the court was not gay. The choice of a melancholy drama, instead of the merry piece generally got up at Bellevue, was perhaps itself—although the marquise was as far as possible from imagining it—a result of the gravity of surrounding circumstances.

And in truth, they were grave enough.

Voltaire had written in February: "If you wish for news from our armies, the regiment of Champagne, though fighting like a lion, has been beaten like a dog. If you wish for news from the navy, our vessels are captured every day. If you prefer financial intelligence, we do not own a cent." In December, it was still worse. The war had been suspended during the winter, but the following year it broke out, more terrible and more ruinous than in any of the preceding ones. The family compact of which we have already spoken briefly, had irritated exceedingly the English. Spain they said ought to immediately be made to feel the consequences of her reconciliation with France; and British avarice had already calculated her gains in vessels of war, in treasures and colonies. Pitt, the organ of this animosity and expectation, demanded war, but he had found himself the only one in the cabinet who desired it without delay. He had resigned. His resignation, given with great ostentation, had only served to goad on public opinion. His successor, Lord Bute, who had formerly wished for peace, not only with Spain, but even with France—Lord Bute, the leader of the tories—had yielded to the general excitement. Spain was to be attacked. France, by virtue of the family compact, was obliged to defend her.

Thus, while the regiments in Germany, decimated and discouraged, were slowly returning to re-organize themselves in their exhausted country, it would be necessary for the following year, to look to the South as well as to the North, to the sea as well as to the land, and that, without any of those martial illusions which give strength to the weak and courage even to cowards. It would be necessary to aid Spain, with the conviction that they had brought her misfortunes upon her, and that it would be impossible to save her. They must fight. in

short, with the certainty that even were they to be as successful as they were brave, they could obtain no decisive success. Although the last campaign had not been wanting in glory, the question had not only not advanced, but had even retrograded since the commencement of the year. Noble blood had flowed abundantly; whole families plunged into mourning, began to ask what all this had produced. Eyes were lifted to the throne. From the throne descended pensions, but nothing more. From the king, there could be expected no enthusiasm for France, no serious interest in those who fell upon the field of honor, none of those words so penetrating to a brave heart, and with which the Bearnais so richly paid his soldiers.

The court was divided into two parties. The marshals de Soubise and de Broglie had returned from Germany, mutually accusing each other of having caused the reverses of the army. Both had been in fault; both had committed the greatest and most inexcusable mistake; they had been vanquished. They could have been, indeed it would perhaps have been right, had they both been disgraced; but if it were necessary to choose, Soubise was unquestionably the one to be sacrificed. It was he who, at Fillinghausen, by neglecting to occupy certain defiles, and by leaving his colleague to fight unsupported for three hours, had caused the loss of the battle; he it was, who personally brave, but incapable of conceiving and much less of executing a plan of any extent, constantly disarranged those of the marechal de Broglie, who considered himself fortunate when they were not intentionally thwarted. Excepting personal bravery, (and even that was not very common among the private soldiers,) there remained hardly anything that constitutes a powerful army, capable of doing great things. There was no discipline, no unity, no confidence in their chiefs, who in truth merited none. The moment come, they fought well,

but until then, they had had no desire for battle. Months, entire seasons were taken up in marches and countermarches. It was Turenne without his genius; it was the art of war, which like all other arts, had from excessive refinement become completely sterile. It awaited its regeneration, and the marshal Soubise was less capable than any one else of effecting this regeneration.

But he was the friend of Madame de Pompadour; he had been appointed, sustained, even directed by her. Had she not more than once sent him plans of the campaign according to her own ideas,—maps, upon which she had marked with patches, the cities to be taken, the palaces to be fortified? Therefore it could not have been he, but fortune, that was in fault. His rival, consequently, had just been degraded and exiled. This was all that was necessary to cause public disgrace, until then divided between the two, to fall with all its weight upon the favorite of the marquise. They did not content themselves with this. No sooner exiled than absolved from his fault, the marshal de Broglie had become in a few days a great captain, a hero. These two lines:

> "Tancred is exiled, outraged, and despoiled,
> For persecution is the hero's lot,"

were applauded vehemently. His successor, whoever he might be, was already condemned. Public malignity deprived the army, in advance, of all the confidence and enthusiasm which it might have regained in the spring.

Even at court, where no one dreamed of opposing the all-powerful influence of the marquise, the marshal de Broglie had never had so many friends as since his fall. Madame de Pompadour could not be ignorant of the fact, that although some few might be friends in consequence of his own merit,

the greater part were so owing to a desire to mortify her, and to the distinctions with which she had loaded his rival. She asked herself then, not without alarm, if she had not connected her fate too closely with that of an unfortunate general, the odium of whose past reverses was already falling on her, and whose future ones might ruin her with him.

"All vainly you may strive, oh fair and kind marquise,
To act as laundry-maid to General Soubise.
Your credit and your words cannot avail to brighten,
The dark spot on his brow which marks his foul disgrace;
And folks will always say, that dark disgrace to heighten,—
If Pompadour tried him to whiten,
Fred'ric the Great to *iron* him did please."

Thus rhymed the courtiers, and the court and the city sung their doggerel. The time was passed when it could be said, "Let them sing, provided they pay." Now, at this epoch, songs were a portion of the vanguard. Behind, was a whole army, with the Encyclopedia for their standard, destruction for their watchword, and the future for their battlefield.

In former times, France had been called an "absolute monarchy, moderated by songs;" but the country had passed unconsciously under the dominion of absolute ideas, which converted even songs into one of its most powerful instruments. Thus alternately increased or diminished in signification all these questions relating to the present and the future, according as individuals were attacked through institutions, or institutions through individuals. Some great movement might after all terminate by a couplet; and a couplet might inclose the germ of some great movement.

XXXIX.

RICHELIEU'S STUDIES.

In the meantime, the duke de Richelieu, unable to resist the caprices of the marquise, had set to work to study his part. He still hoped that he would not be obliged to play it; but as to a formal refusal, that he dared not.

Besides his repugnance to figure at his age in an amusement of this kind, he dreaded, and not without reason, the treachery of his memory, and his utter incapacity in regard to poetry. The rules of prosody were to him as difficult as those of orthography; he had never remembered them, never understood them; in fact, he had not the bump for it, as we would say in these days. He knew no other way to discover whether a line was correct or not, but to scan it upon his fingers. If he heard or recited one foot more or less, it was all the same to him. From this fact, even when he was perfectly right, his want of confidence in himself was so great, that he lost his thread every moment. Few men, in conversation, spoke with more facility than he, but in poetry this very facility was a drawback to him. He was constantly substituting words of his own, which were almost always either too long or too short.

He had therefore spoken to the king about the embarrassing position in which he was placed. The king had already determined not to permit the duke, an ancient general, so to expose himself to ridicule; but as the preliminaries of these little dramas had always been more amusing to him than the dramas themselves, he did not appear to disapprove of this extraordinary project of the marquise. He was particularly fond of being present at the rehearsals. And it is said that he showed no little talent and energy in these little lessons.

The marshal also gave instruction on this subject very well ;* but as to receiving any, he felt himself incapable of it.

He had, therefore, set to work in advance. When Madame de Pompadour had spoken with confidence of his consent, she knew more of the matter than she appeared to do. The king had confided to her that Richelieu was already studying his lesson, and that he, the king, would insist upon his reciting it to her.

XL.

RICHELIEU AND HIS TASK.

On this same evening, then, about an hour before the rehearsal, the king and his first nobleman were chatting together by the fire. The king, as was generally the case when he was sure of some occupation for the evening, was in a tolerably good humor. The marshal, contrary to his custom, was exceedingly preoccupied. This was a new source of amusement for the king, who called him the young debutant, and laughed at his apprehensions.

"There," said Louis XV., after having aided him as well as he could in one of the tirades of poor old Lisimon.—"do you know that this piece is not worth a sou ?"

And he threw it on the mantlepiece. It was a pamphlet in octavo, on that course gray paper on which everything not of the highest importance was then printed. Paper, be it said in passing, has been a long time in reaching perfection. Not an hundred years ago, the most fastidious marquis wrote his love-letters on a sort of pasteboard, which in these days a corporal would not deign to use.

* He had, as first gentlemen of the bedchamber, the superintendence of the royal theatres.

"Is that meant for me, sire?" said Richelieu, disconsolately.

"Don't pity yourself too much. Your part is the best,—the least bad, I should say. Then," added the king, laughing, "acted by you—"

"Your Majesty wishes to overwhelm me."

"You are very modest, Richelieu."

"You are very cruel, sire."

"*Par pari refertur.*"

To speak Latin to the marshal was another of the king's amusements. He knew very little about it himself; but Richelieu, be it remembered, did not know a word.

"What did you say, sire?" said Richelieu.

"Ah, yes. I only take my revenge. Were you not laughing at me when you said I sang well?"

"But—"

"No 'buts.' You were laughing at me."

"I, sire!"

"'That *I*, my lord, should have a soul so black!'"

said the king, in a declamatory tone. "Come, Cinna," continued he, "no exclamations—

"'Be seated, for I have not told thee all.'"

"Say on, sire."

"Well, then, the day that the '*Devin*' of Monsieur Rousseau was rehearsed with the marquise, I was singing some air—what, I do not recollect. You said: 'Well, very well,' until I really believed it. Suddenly, before a mirror, what did I see?"

"How, sire! you saw—"

"Good! *Habemus confit*—"

"Sire?"

"I saw—what you remember very well, I perceive—I saw

my first gentleman pretending to stop his ears. Did I see rightly, Monsieur de Richelieu?

"'Thou'rt silent! Ha! thou holdest now thy tongue!
Not from obedience, but a sense of wrong.'"

"Continue, sire!"

"What?"

"Your part. I am waiting for the 'Let us be friends!'"

"Have we ceased to be friends?"

"Ah! sire, that is still more magnanimous!"

"Well, since we are friends again, and since the principal characteristic of friendship is frankness—"

The king shook his head.

"Go on, sire!"

"Truth, my dear duke, forces me to tell you that you are fully capable of ruining this character, which is none too good already."

Richelieu seemed astonished. Notwithstanding his repugnance to reciting verses, his self-love had caused him to believe that he did it very well.

"Yes," resumed the king, "since the author has made his piece so very pompous, the actor should at least not take away the small amount of nature that remains. You are too great a gentleman, Richelieu, to play the part of a simple old man."

"Let them take the simple old man away from me then. I ask nothing better!" exclaimed the duke.

"Not so! Not so! Come, let us try these verses again. And try to put less talent where nothing but feeling is required."

Richelieu rose, came forward a few steps, and then returning, with the air of a man who is seeking something, began—

"'Behold the shore
On which my son has pined in slavery.'"

"That is better," said the king.

"'And has your arm, oh God, sustained him here,
Amidst the horrors—'"

"Softly! softly!"

"'—of a wretched fate?
And shall I see him more? Or now in heaven
Do you reward him for his virtuous life?'"

"Ta, ta, ta, ta. There we are, in the clouds."

"Who? The poet or me?"

"Both of you. Then here is another absurdity which I did not see before."

"What?"

"This is a Protestant speaking. The Protestants never call God 'you.'"

"True. That is the way poets always do. Our Greeks and Romans are no more Greeks and Romans than this Lisimon is a Protestant."

"You ought to tell Voltaire that," said the king.

"Yes, if I wanted to gain a mortal enemy! To hear him talk, it is he who has brought to light the manners, language and characteristics of antiquity. Corneille, he says, had some idea of them; Racine had none, which, by the way, is true enough; he, Voltaire, has discovered their primitive sources. While, really, with a few shades of difference, it is always exactly the same thing. The Greeks would recognize themselves no better in '*Mérope* than in *Phédrus*;' the Romans no better in '*César* than in *Brittanicus*.' He says that in '*Mahomet*' he has depicted the manners of the Arabs; in '*Zaire*,' those of the Christians and Mussulmen. But he would only be obliged to change the names and modify a few details, in order to con-

vert his pretended Arabs into Christians, his Christians into Arabs, and his Mussulmen into Arabs or Christians. The whole system is false, sire?"

"Yes," added the king, "and the worst sort of falsehood, that which speaks with the authority of truth. What you say of the drama may be said of all the writings of the day. In the time of fictions, it was truth which was concealed beneath fiction; but in these days, when every one reasons, it is falsehood which is concealed beneath the exterior of truth. But come, the hour will soon be here. They are expecting us. Be natural, Richelieu. You have just been preaching very well, preach a little by example."

XLI.

A BANKRUPT NATION.

Madame de Pompadour was, in fact, expecting them, but was, in the meantime, occupied in a very different manner. Whilst the king of France was criticising poetry in the chimney-corner, with an old courtier, his mistress with two of the ministers, was planning the budget, and discussing plans for the coming campaign.

The duke de Choiseul, whom we have seen already as minister of foreign affairs, had been now for some months minister of war. He had for a time retained both departments, then yielding the first to the comte de Choiseul-Praslin, his relative and dependant, he had taken that of minister of naval affairs, a sinecure, said the malicious wits, since the English had rid France of her vessels and colonies. Berryer, his predecessor, had done nothing but commit blunders. His meddlesomeness was as great as his incapacity, and he had only completed the

ruin of what was still called the fleet. But, like Monsieur de Soubise, he was a protégé of Madame de Pompadour, and accordingly, when he was deprived of the navy, the seals were given him. Thus, of a lieutenant of police, a minister of naval affairs had been made; and of a minister of naval affairs, a chancellor. This was, in fact, the way with all offices. "A calculator was needed, and a dancer was chosen."

But the most important of the ministries, as well as the most disordered, was that of finances.

We have seen the king quarrelling with Monsieur de Silhouette, the comptroller-general, in regard to the retrenchments which the latter demanded in the court expenditures. Monsieur de Silhouette had obtained a few reforms, which had only served to open all eyes to the enormity of the abuses. Thus, for example, the linen used by the king and the royal family was renewed every three years. It cost a considerable sum, and that which was thrown aside, fell almost new into the hands of the principal servants. It was decided that it should last five years.*

The reforming minister was praised extravagantly. "If Monsieur de Silhouette," wrote Voltaire to Thiriot, "goes on as he has begun, a niche must be found for him in the temple of fame, beside Colbert." Alas! he had begun by cutting off the king's gambling money, and this money, as we have seen, only took another way to come into the king's possession. And so it was, more or less, with all the reforms which were attempted by the comptroller-general.

The king had not even confined himself to taking back with one hand what he had given with the other. Yielding to a temptation, of which we must endeavor to think that he did not see all the shame, he thought it admissible to seek in spec-

* Monsieur Neckar afterwards had this term extended to seven years.

ulation a resource for the private expenses of his luxury and immoralities. He had accordingly established, or had established, a special agency. His name, with scarcely an attempt at concealment, figured in unworthy and dishonest affairs. The first step had cost him little effort, the succeeding ones were still easier. Five years afterwards, so little was cared even about appearance, that there was seen in the *Royal Almanac*, the name of a *surveyor of grain for his Majesty*. A number of monopolies were carried on in several provinces under the name of this agent, and public rumor, as might have been expected, did not fail enormously to exaggerate the profits. Never had a prince more imprudently played with unpopularity.

But to return. Instead of obtaining a niche in the temple of fame, Silhouette had not remained a year in place. After a few weeks of that easily-acquired popularity, which is never refused to any one who appears to wish to do right, he had found himself once more the manager of empty coffers and an exhausted kingdom. These coffers must be filled. Silhouette could think of no better expedient, than to summon everybody to this great work, and so everybody had grumbled; some, because they had as much as ever to pay, and others, because they were accustomed to let others do so. These good people fancied that by dint of striving, money would finally be found, without their being obliged to give it. It was a constant repetition of the story of that indignant petitioner, who said to the abbé Terray, one of Silhouette's successors, "What, Monseigneur, you wish to take our money out of our very pockets!" To which the abbé replied, naïvely, "And from where, pray, would you have me take it?"

With this exception, the new system was a good one; it bore a great resemblance to those which experience has since

caused to be adopted. A general *subsidy* was ordered, according to a fixed proportion, upon all real estate, including that of the nobility and clergy. The citizens paid for keeping shop; the nobility for having carriages and footmen. The ordinary poll-tax,—the old *capitation*,—was to be double for bachelors having a certain income. Particular taxes were laid on articles of luxury. In short, it was equality establishing itself in taxation, before it did in laws and customs.

And accordingly no one wanted equality at this price and in this form. The edict, forcibly registered, had not been found capable of execution, and the comptroller-general, driven to the last extremity, had permitted himself to exercise the most deplorable violence. The public deposits, the sinking fund, all that was in his power, had disappeared in the gulf, and disappeared without having even left any evidence that there was good gained by these desperate measures. He had at length retired, overwhelmed with sarcasms and maledictions. "What a milk-sop was that Silhouette!" wrote Voltaire.* "The translator of Pope's 'All's Well,' soon made me perceive that all was ill." Breeches without pockets, which were worn at this time, were called breeches *à la Silhouette*. Portraits representing the shadow instead of the substance, were entitled (and this name has not been altered) *silhouettes*.

It was easy to laugh at him; to do better than he, none hoped. Bertin, the lieutenant of police, allowed himself to be implored for a long time to succeed him. In desperate cases, none but quacks offer to cure, and Bertin was no quack. "You do not wish to be comptroller-general?" said the king to him one day. "It is a proof that you understand the business." He at length accepted the situation, and as he had promised nothing, he was the more readily pardoned for his

* Letter to the marquis de Chauvlin.

inability to invent any remedy. One fact shows how completely the treasury was exhausted. Upon entering his duties, Bertin found literally not a sou to continue the service. Five hundred thousand francs, lent by the prince de Conti, appeared to supply the first necessities. Shortly after, we find the comptroller-general in conference with the Jews of Strasburg. They offered several millions; and would be contented with four per cent.—*a month*. They were indignantly repulsed. But the army in Germany was destitute of money and provisions. The Jews will abate nothing; the minister signs. At length, news comes that the squadron of the marquis de Conflans, roughly handled by the English, had arrived in port, and that it could not go to sea again for a certain time. What remained of the money destined for defraying its expenses, was immediately claimed, and sent off to the army beyond the Rhine. Thus a defeat became a piece of good fortune.

It was Bertin who was in the financial department at the time of which we now speak. France, like the king, had at length become accustomed to this irremediable destitution. They rolled down the declivity without thinking any longer of what they might find at the bottom. The comptroller-general headed the race. He was no longer required to stop the car. If he avoided the worst jolts, every one was satisfied.

And yet, like Colbert, he found time and even money for things which were not strictly within his province. He created the veterinary school at Alfort; gave a new impulse and new developments to the manufactory at Sevres; encouraged, throughout the whole kingdom, the establishment of agricultural societies; and sent the marquis de Brèquigny to England, to collect documents relating to the history of France in the middle ages. Madame de Pompadour loved to share in the glory of these institutions and labors. She encouraged

industry through Bertin, as she did the arts through Marigny. Whether from zeal or calculation, she it was who actually directed the little that was now performed of good and great in France.

XLII.

DIPLOMACY.

She had just been passing an hour or two with Choiseul and Bertin. One had brought the budget of receipts,* the other that of expenses, and as usual, there had been found a difference of nearly half between the two.

"And so you have hit upon nothing new?" she asked. "You have imagined nothing?"

"Madame," replied Bertin, "it would be easy enough to imagine. Monsieur de Silhouette had a great imagination, and what ever come of it?"

"But," she resumed, "this state of things cannot last forever."

"And accordingly, as you know, I have made no engagement to retain the situation forever. I wish to relieve the present, if possible, but I can only do this, it is evident, at the expense of the future. The war, once at an end, I shall resign."

"Then," said Choiseul, "we shall probably retain you for a long time yet."

"Take care. I have said that I shall not voluntarily abandon my post before the peace; but if the war should last much longer, it might very easily become untenable. Mark that, Monsieur the duke. My task is to raise money. I have done so thus far, I shall do so still. But the cord is terribly stretched."

* For 1762.

"Bah!" said the duke. "You business men—"

"Gold, Monsieur, is—"

"*The sinew of war.* That is a very old adage, my dear comptroller."

"Alter it; I ask nothing better."

"The sinew of war is—"

"Is what?"

"Is daring."

"Bravo!" said the marquise. "Well, my dear duke, what is it that we are to dare?"

But neither the marquise in crying bravo, nor the duke in speaking of daring, had any serious belief in audacity. The game was lost. The only thing left was to fall, if possible, honorably.

"In the first place," he replied, "while Spain must certainly lose the greater part of her colonies, she must find an equivalent for this in Europe. I have provided for this equivalent. By one of the secret articles of the Family Compact, we acknowledge the sovereignty of the king of Spain over Portugal, in case he wishes, and is able to take possession of it. If we urge him on, he will wish to do so; if we aid him, he will perhaps be able. In any case, this will be a powerful diversion. England will be engaged, in order to aid Portugal, in a war, in which we need only take what part we choose."

"By that means," said the comptroller, "we may take breath a month or two; but still, those troops which you will lend to the king of Spain, to aid him in taking Portugal, must be found and equipped. And then? One of two things; the expedition will either succeed or fail. If it fail, which is probable enough, then we will be beaten in the south; a bad omen for our successes in the north. If it succeed, so much the better for the king of Spain; but what shall we gain by it?"

"Time," said Choiseul, "time,—which is often of more importance than money. While the attention of all is fixed upon Portugal, a new compact is to be formed among those States not included in the other. Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Sardinia, and lastly, all the neutral States, have to complain of England, all are inclined in our favor. And yet it is not with us that they are to be asked to ally themselves—"

"There would not be much temptation," murmured the comptroller-general.

"—but among themselves," continued Choiseul. "A mutual guarantee among all the neutral flags, is what I desire. Before six months have gone by,—without our having the least occasion to meddle,—England, by her bravadoes, will force this alliance to change into cannonading, and we shall see ourselves at the head of all the maritime resources of Europe."

Bertin shook his head.

"This plan," he said, "is not without its grandeur. Events might perhaps prove you right; but if you were wrong, what would become of us? With all the maritime force of Europe, would you be so superior to England, that you could be certain of conquering her? No, no! Peace, Monsieur, peace as soon as possible, and at any price."

"Peace!" cried the minister. "Why we would be obliged to begin by tearing the Compact which has cost us so much labor."

"And which is going to cost so much blood."

"Blood can be replaced, Monsieur; but lost honor cannot again be found."

"France has proved her honor sufficiently."

"She may do so again."

"She will do so, if you order it; but this time it will not be on her own account. It will be for you,—for your pride."

"What is the meaning of this, Monsieur."

"Yes, it is of yourself, and yourself alone, that you now think. This Compact is your work. You will not confess that it comes too late, or too soon. Too late to be useful; too soon not to complicate all the embarrassments of the moment. Honor, say you, honor forbids us to concede anything. Very well, one or two more years like the present one, and you will see if we shall not be forced, willingly or unwillingly, to comply with all that England may demand. I am not very clear, at this moment, what honor does dictate; but what it dictates to you, is, not to urge us on to our ruin."

The duke was accustomed to these sallies.

"Monsieur," he said, coldly, "you will permit me to be judge, in regard to all questions of honor concerning myself. For the rest, I confess I did not know that your opinion agreed so well with those of the king of Prussia's friends; but you must admit, that one would scarcely expect to meet with such sentiments in the council of the king of France."

"Well, I no longer belong to it!" cried the comptroller-general. "In a quarter of an hour, my resignation shall be in the king's hands."

XLIII.

FRUITLESS CONSULTATIONS.—THE NAVY.

"What is wanted with me?" said the king.

He was just entering, followed by Richelieu, and had heard the last words.

"It seems we are holding a council, here," he added, looking inquiringly at our three friends, who had risen upon his appearance.

He seemed, however, more surprised at the time chosen, than at the occurrence itself. Madame de Pompadour had never concealed from him, save when she had her own private reasons, her consultations with the principal ministers. He liked to rely upon her, and to have afterwards in the council, only to confirm what she and they had agreed upon.

"Come, sire," she said, "come and make peace."

"Peace!" interrupted Bertin. "Thanks, Madame! That is a word of which I accept the augury. Yes, sire, come and make peace, not between Monsieur the duke and myself, which matters very little, but between France and Europe. I have examined, sire, so far as is my business, our position for the coming year. It is disastrous,—untenable."

"Come," said the king, seating himself, "do you speak seriously? I have been told the same thing for the last ten years. *Disastrous,—untenable*, and yet we contrive to hold out."

"Until we can no longer contrive to make the state of things last."

"It will last as—"

He was about to repeat his abominable phrase. A glance stopped him. The marquise was seriously annoyed at this incurable egotism. She wished to reign, but the more she wished to use power, the more she felt she ought to avoid allowing it to become too much degraded by him who was its source.

"By the way," he resumed, "this is not precisely what we came here for, Madame."

"One moment, pray, sire."

"Let it be a moment, then. What were you saying, Monsieur Bertin?"

Choiseul was anxious that he should retain his post. He

liked him both as a man and an administrator. And besides, he could perceive no one to replace him.

"Sire," he said, "Monsieur Bertin desires peace."

"So do I," said the king.

"So do we,—all of us," resumed the duke. "We are unanimous in fact,—and this is no time to quarrel about details."

"Details!" murmured Bertin.

But the minister and the marquise both at the same moment cast a glance half supplicating, half imperative, at him. He was silent.

"We were making," resumed the duke, "our plans for the campaign."

"Already!" cried the king. "In winter!"

"I should not be surprised, sire, to hear that the English have already attacked the Spanish colonies."

"War has not been declared."

"It is about to be. And our neighbors are not so very particular. We have had some specimens of it."

"True. How many of our vessels did they capture in '56, before the official rupture?"

"About three hundred, sire, without counting three vessels of war."

"And how many of the latter have we lost, in these five years?"

"Ninety-three," said Bertin.

"And we have left—?"

"Ah! sire," continued the comptroller-general, without paying any regard to the angry glances of the prime minister, "we have just enough left, to admit of there being still some little glory in taking them from us."

"Hush, Monsieur!" cried Choiseul, "you slander France."

"I am telling the king the truth."

"Our navy—"

"Where is it?"

"Where is it? Listen, listen, sire. In a year, I shall have eleven new ships of the line, which will not have cost you a sous."

"You say that?"

He began to rouse himself a little.

"Eleven, sire, eleven. I have given notice to the rulers of several provinces, to the common council of Paris, to the company of receivers general, and that of the stock-brokers, and all of these bodies are ready to offer each one a vessel. You shall see, Monsieur," addressing himself to Bertin, "whether France is as lifeless as you dare to assert."

"Well, sire," said the marquise. "Eleven ships! What think you of that?"

"I think that it is just enough to augment, in a small degree, the glory of which Monsieur Bertin spoke."

"What, sire! You also!"

"And do you honestly believe, that those who captured ninety-three ships, will not take eleven more?* And yet—yes,—it is a fine gift. They are richer than we,—these provinces, these companies."

"It will produce an immense effect," said Choiseul. "Eleven vessels thus procured, are more than twenty, more than thirty constructed at the expense of the government."

"We must see," said the king, "in what way I can thank all these people,—for the medal always has its reverse. We must thank. A king thanking his subjects! Well, I shall

* "Poor Frenchmen, with your provincial ships! Lay up a good store of coffee and sugar; you will have to pay dear for them before long."—(VOLTAIRE. Letter to d'Argental. 8th March, 1762.)

thank them. Eleven vessels.—Yes, it is worth the trouble.—Eleven.—But why not twelve ?"

"The twelfth is also offered, sire, but as to accepting it, it is a grave question."

"By whom is it offered ?"

"By the Protestant committees."

"A grave question, as you say—"

XLIV.

PLANS OF THE PROTESTANTS.

A few details are necessary in this place.

For some years past, it had been in contemplation to profit by the embarrassments of the government, in order to induce it to put an end to the religious persecutions.

At first, a bank had been suggested. The discounting bank, whose operations had been suspended by the war, was again to be set in motion by means of funds furnished exclusively by the Protestants. Founded by the royal authorization, and reorganized as a public establishment, this bank would be an immense step towards their admission to civil rights.

The marshal de Belle Isle, then president of the council, had received the first overtures very favorably. It was at his suggestion that the king had created the order of *Military Merit*, in favor of Protestant officers, who were, of course, unable to receive the cross of Saint-Louis. A generous but very odd idea. An order of knighthood for people who had actually been even deprived of the right of hiring horses.*

One Cotin, of whom we know nothing further, had been commissioned by the marshals to carry on the affair of the

* Edict of June 16, 1681.

bank. Several letters from this agent were found among Rabaut's papers. "It will be easy," he wrote in July 1760, "to find three or four millions for an enterprise in which there is no risk whatever; particularly, as it is the only means which the Protestants have left of attracting to themselves the good will of the sovereign, and of meriting the kindness of his heart." This, it will be perceived, is still more odd than the institution of an order. They were about to offer for money, that toleration which had for eighty years been refused, as contrary to the laws of God, and the sacred rights of the church. During the preceding year, the marshal had written to one of the authors of the project: "I shall be very well satisfied if your first settlements be from three to four millions, provided you arrange them with all the care which circumstances will make necessary, and that you soon put me in a condition to commence operations."

The business was, however, in a less advanced state than the minister appeared to think; it is not even certain that the idea of it was not orignated by certain intriguing persons at Paris, who manœuvred between the government and the churches, sometimes useful to the persecuted Protestants, but more frequently only succeeding in compromising them.

In fact, the advantages were doubtful, the disadvantages certain. A few of the Protestants had acquiesced, but there was soon a unanimous decision that the thing should not take place.

Rabaut had been one of the first to oppose it. A memorial found among his papers, informs us of his reasons.

"It is asserted," he said, among other considerations, "that even if his majesty should withhold his agreement, it could still only be honorable and useful for us to have showed ourselves such good citizens and zealous subjects, even when we are refused the names and privileges of such. But it is not

enough to found the bank—it must be kept up. Fresh funds will be needed, and these will undoubtedly be more difficult to procure after the first time. The bank will fall through, and the very least that we may expect in such a case, is ridicule." Thus, according to Rabaut, if the bank failed, nothing would have been accomplished, and millions lost; if it succeeded, it was by no means certain that it would have been favorably looked upon by the government. "Let us not deceive ourselves," he continued; "we have to deal with enemies whom we can never win by awakening their gratitude. If they pay the slightest attention to us, it is on account of our number, industry and wealth; not on account of our principles, over which the clergy have thrown the thickest mist. In this case, besides, we should seem too evidently to have been generous only from interested motives, and we ourselves could not conscientiously affirm that this was not so."

The pastor then remarked upon the importance to the Protestants, of the preservation of their money; "the only thing," he said, "of which we are really the owners, since we are chained down in regard to our real estate, not being able to sell an inch without permission of the court. Would it not be tightening our bonds, to place in the hands of the State all that of which it has not yet been able to deprive us? Then the priests would have the game in their own hands; their counsels would be the more closely followed, since policy could no longer oppose them with the fear of emigrations. What a temptation it would be for us to do all that was demanded of us, in the fear of losing everything by resisting. Few would have the courage to evacuate the stronghold without arms or baggage." In short, the whole thing might be a mere trick to induce the clergy to contribute more largely to the support of the State. A magnificent *gratuitous subscription* would not fail

to be contrasted with the "smallness of our contribution," particularly as the Protestants had only lent, while the clergy gave.

The plan was accordingly abandoned, but the idea of a free gift analagous to that of the clergy, was taken up. There could be no disadvantage in this, it was thought. They could give less, but it would be a gift; besides, all could join in this, while the rich alone could have founded the bank. As for the advantages, they would not be forced to await them from a doubtful success, or from a still more doubtful gratitude. Precautions might be taken. Before paying for toleration, it might be secured. With this in view, they would commence by asking the king's permission to make him a free gift. If this permission were refused, that was enough; if it were granted, they would go a step farther. They would request the king himself to designate the Protestants who should collect the money. Now this nomination by the king would be an official, although indirect acknowledgment of the existence of the French Protestants; it would be, accordingly, the overthrow of the system of legislation based, as we have seen, upon the hypothesis that there were none in the kingdom.

And, in consequence, the government recoiled from this condition, which the Protestants, on their side, counselled by Rabaut, would not abandon. And accordingly the second project was given up like the first.

Yet it was still a question with many, whether the Protestants had acted wisely in insisting upon this condition. Some said, that if the king had been made to accept a gift, no matter in what form, openly announced as coming from the Protestants, it would have been assuming a position from which they could not be driven. How could he send to the galleys and the scaffold, those whose money he had accepted? After hav-

ing once permitted them to present themselves as Protestants and citizens, how could he maintain the laws which refused them both titles? And, accordingly, many regretted that the affair had failed.

Thus, when the offering of vessels to the king was first spoken of, many were of opinion that this new opportunity should be seized. Instead of money, they would give a vessel. The committee of Paris, of which Gebelin was the head, had communicated this to the court, and the duke de Choiseul, as we have just seen, had not yet expressed, or at least did not judge it expedient, just at present, to express his opinion. He had no hatred for the Protestants, but he did not care enough for them to risk any portion of his credit on their account.

XLV.

SELFISH INDIFFERENCE.

But the king was in no mood to occupy himself with serious business.

"A grave question, as you say," he resumed. "We will speak of it another time. I do not know, in fact, when we shall have done with these everlasting Huguenots. Have they yet condemned those—those Calas?"

"Not yet, sire."

"They take a long time to it."

"Does your Majesty believe them guilty?"

"I? I know nothing about it. It is the business of the judges. And this—this Rochette;—is he dead?"

"Not yet."

"And yet the edicts are explicit; and I was told that he had admitted all."

"Your Majesty desires his execution?" said the marquise.

"I am not particularly anxious. But there are the edicts. They must be carried out."

"It is in your Majesty's power to mitigate their severity."

"If I pardoned one minister, it would be like authorizing and amnestying all the rest."

"And we must certainly come to that, one of these days," said the comptroller-general.

"Perhaps so; but there are still too many people opposed to it. And I am too old to expose myself to being deafened by their protestations."

"They came near making a famous capture lately," said Richelieu.

"I know it," said the king. "The same man who brought me a petition last year. He was allowed to make his escape, and do you know by whom, Madame?"

She knew very well.

"Who was it?" she asked.

"Your friend Narniers."

"He did you a great service thereby, sire," said the duke de Choiseul.

"A service?"

"Yes. The news of the minister's arrest was sufficient to exasperate the whole province. If the news of his escape had not reached them soon, we might presently have had half Languedoc on our hands, and your Majesty is aware that the English have their eye upon this province."

"And now?"

"Everything is quiet again. Rabaut himself disapproved of all attempts at insurrection."

"Very good; but for all that, Narniers took a singular liberty. Chastise him well for it, marquise."

"What a commission, sire!"

"Very well, when I see him—"

"Your Majesty will see him presently. He is one of our—"

"Ah? Very good. *Au revoir*, Monsieur the duke; *au revoir*, Monsieur Bertin. Come to an understanding, gentlemen, come to an understanding. You—procure money for me. You—lose as little as possible. And God protect France! Adieu."

XLVI.

BERTIN.—PENSIONS.—NOW, AND THEN.

"Yes," murmured Bertin, as he went away, "yes, God protect France! He is right, for if God do not,—*he* is certainly not the person to do so."

"What do you say?" asked Choiseul.

"Oh! nothing, nothing. What has the king so important to do this evening?"

"A comedy, I believe—"

The man of business thrust his hat upon his head, and his portfolio under his arm. But as he came grumbling out into the gallery, he was saluted,

"Monseigneur!"

"Monseigneur!"

There were twenty hungry petitioners waiting to seize him upon his passage, for it was one of the privileges of the comptroller-general to have constantly at his heels as many people as all the rest of the ministers put together. The pensions, granted at random, were never paid regularly. "I have granted you a pension of one thousand crowns," said Louis XV. himself one day to an officer of his household, "but don't go and increase your expenses, for you will never get the money."

Like the great lord who said to one of his friends, "How much do you give your valet?" "One hundred crowns?" "I give two hundred to mine. It is true, I never pay him."

It was an easy thing, therefore, to procure a pension; the great matter was, to procure its payment. The king's own word secured, guaranteed nothing. In this same year, 1761, we see him subscribing for two hundred copies of the annotated edition of Corneille, the profits of which were to be devoted to forming the dowry of a descendant of the great dramatist. Voltaire was very sensible of the honor of having the king's name at the head of his subscription list; the money, as we may see in his letters, he had no idea of seeing.

The pensions were constantly in arrears three or six months, sometimes whole years. This caused the huge system of begging, of which the comptroller-general was the centre. Upon his entrance into the duties of his situation, whether he were nobleman or commoner, the princes of the blood sent their congratulations to him, and this singular homage to wealth had been renewed five or six times within the last ten years; moreover the duchess of Orleans, upon sending to Monsieur de la Silhouette the morning after his nomination, had recommended the inquiry, whether he was yet in office. But the more advances they made, the more they imagined they had a right to exact. This also was the cause of the endless recriminations, of which the comptroller-general was the victim, forced as he was to choose among the petitioners, and to make discontented at least as many as he made happy.

But on this particular evening, Bertin was himself too much out of humor to care whom he displeased. He did not even look at all these petitioners; and he roughly repulsed all the memorials which were handed him. He knew that his coffers contained no more than was needed to supply the most urgent

demands. And when he returned to his hotel, he did not even find all of the little he had left there; the *receipts for ready money*, had carried off a part of it. These were bonds signed by the king's own hand, and which the treasurer was bound to acquit whatever might be the state of the finances. It is scarcely necessary to remark that these receipts for ready money were generally reserved for illegal favors, and shameful debts.

Thus it was in France, in the year 1761.

And are things going on better now? Are we all going on better,—for this is a question to be addressed not only to France, but to all the present generations of men,—are we going on better,—we ask,—than the eighteenth century?

Let him who can, answer,—let him who dares, decide. Some sources of corruption have been closed; others have been opened. Many names have been changed, while the thing remains the same. Pensions were solicited by those who had no claims; situations are now received by those who have not the capacity to fill them. The ministers are less run after, but it is because payments are made regularly. Less money is begged of them, but it is because they are asked for something better. What did they give formerly? A few crowns. Now, they bestow upon you a railroad, on which, in a few moments, you will gain an hundred thousand. The corruption which formerly descended from the throne, did not extend beyond a certain sphere; that which now swells high in all directions, finds no house, no heart completely sheltered from it. Excepting the great bankers, no one,—very few, at least, dreamed of becoming rich rapidly. Opportunity was wanting, it is true; but opportunity and temptation wanting, people remained in their primitive simplicity. A fortune to be made, was like a tree to be planted, and left to grow under

the care of God, and at the mercy of the seasons. This tree was cultivated; it was not lost sight of, and the smallest growth was observed with delight. But no one dreamed of hastening this growth, otherwise than by care, labor, or patience.* The father had planted, the son must water; and father and son thought it very natural that the grandson should partake of the first fruit of the tree.

Is it the same with us? Is not the cause of our severity against the eighteenth century, in a measure this,—that the evil was then in high places, while now it is everywhere?

XLVII.

THE PLAY.

To return to our narrative.

The actors were waiting in an adjoining apartment. There were, besides those whom Madame de Pompadour had mentioned at her toilette, the comtesse d'Estrades, the duke de Coigny, the marquis de Narniers, and the marquis de Courtenvaux. There was to be no audience save the king.

In order to amuse themselves while waiting, they had set to work to criticise the piece. They had said—what they thought of it; and those forced to study it, could not have any very high opinion of it.

"What a part mine is!" said the duke of Orleans. "What a heap of—"

"Monseigneur," said the compte d'Entraigues, "you cannot always have a Thibault to play."

Thibault, in the *Hunting party of Henry IV*, was the duke's

* From 1740 to 1745, there were but seventeen bankrupteies in Paris, about four a year.

favorite part. He had *created* it, as the saying is, when he played it in the little theatre of his villa at Bagnolet.

"This compte d'Anplace," he resumed, "is certainly the most good for nothing, silly—"

"Do you complain? I should like very well only to have to be silly. This d'Olban, with his phrases, his speeches, his fine words, and his barbarism—"

"A poor amplification of the Misanthrope—"

"And of the furies of Orestes. Listen a moment, how he makes me begin,—

> "'At last thank Heaven, against the human race
> The hate which I do bear is justified.
> Let them come now—'"

"Yes, yes. A second edition of the famous:

> "'I am content; accomplished is my fate!'"

"A revised edition—"

"And spoiled—"

"And *popularized* (*embourgeoisée*,) as everything is at the present time."

"Poor Protestants!" said the marquis de Narniers. "So much bad prose against them,—and such wretched verse in their favor!"

"One might pardon the verse," said the marquis d'Entraigues, "if the ideas had any sense in them. Now here are two old friends,—two very old friends,—and yet it is the first time that Cécile confesses to Amélie her very old attachment to a certain individual."

"To me," said Marigny, bridling up.

"Oh! the coxcomb! Do you see? He is loved,—that is enough. He is satisfied with his part."

"You are jealous, d'Olban. But go on. Let us see whether you have appreciated all the beauties of this masterpiece."

"Well, André, the fortunate lover, is at the galleys; but his faithful one knows nothing of this. Where was she, what was she about, when he was sent there, the victim of his devotion for his father? Nobody knows. The most curious thing is, that no one at Toulon, not even the intendant of the bagnio, knows why André is there. He persists in keeping silence upon that point; the secret of his devotion is to die with him. But Cécile arrives at Toulon. She has accompanied her friend, who comes for nothing less than to marry you, Monseigneur, and who, at the moment when she should say yes, says no, seeing that an old uncle, upon whose fortune you count, is so obstinate as not to die. Then I, d'Olban, arrive from America, in order to marry Cécile, who cannot endure me, and who wishes, she says, to remain faithful to André, which has not prevented her from marrying an old Crœsus in the meantime, who luckily died, after having left her all his fortune. As for me, the loss of a lawsuit has put me into a frightful humor, and the refusal of Cécile completes my rage.

"In the meantime, André, who does not recognize her, asks her for news of his country and his father. He has refused the offers of the comte, who is willing and able to serve him; he addresses himself to an unknown lady, whom he accidentally perceives upon the shore. Why? I do not know, nor the author either, I imagine. At all events, they recognize each other, after a few questions,—but they do not embrace, for Cécile must naturally think that her lover was sent to the galleys for some crime. Does he at least undeceive her? No. His discretion does not forsake him, he will not tell her, even at the risk of beholding her die of shame and grief, that he is innocent, that he gave himself up in place of his father.

"Finally, for the thing must come to an end sooner or later, the aged Lisimon himself makes his appearance. He relates his own and André's history to all who care to hear it. Everything becomes plain. André is proclaimed the most virtuous of men; his pardon is demanded from the king; and he is permitted—which is not very legal—to act in the meantime as if he had obtained it. He marries Cécile. Amélie, to whom Cécile presents a dowry, marries the comte d'Anplace. And I, d'Olban, stand there looking at them. But they are good souls. They propose very gravely, in order to console me, and also, I fancy, for the pleasure of uttering one more absurdity,—that I shall go and live with them. That is the whole. Remark that there are five acts, and that the principal subject, the real subject, does not fill one half of this."

XLVIII.

FRÉRON.

"Very good," said the duke d'Orleans. "That is dissected with a masterly hand. I thought I was listening to Fréron."

"I am much obliged."

"Ah! you too take this name for an insult?"

"It is the fashion."

"The fashion! I did not know you were so much its slave. Fréron, my dear marquis, is a man who dares to say what he thinks."

"And what he does not think, too."

"Rarely."

"*Rarely!* Excellent, excellent! 'You lie, Monsieur.' 'No, *rarely*.'"

"Fréron has never lied as much about all our authors put together, as Voltaire has about Fréron alone."

"That is very possible."

"Have you seen the last number of the *Année Littéraire?*"*

"The *Année Littéraire* or the *Ane Littéraire,*† did you say?"

"The *Année.*"

"I do not read it."

"So much the worse. You might see there, how the ass—since there is an ass in the case—gives famous kicks sometimes."

"That is because the lion is old."

"Not too old to bite. Besides, he was not old when Fréron commenced his kicks."

XLIX.

THE REHEARSAL.

They were at this point when the king entered.

"Good evening, gentlemen," he said. "Good evening, Madame la comtesse. Well, are we ready?"

They assented.

"Apropos, Monsieur de Narniers, it was generally believed in other days that there was but one king in France."

"Sire—"

"It is said that certain individuals thought even one too much."

"Sire—"

"I think myself that it is quite enough. But you, I am told, are of another opinion."

* Fréron's paper.

† The *Ane Littéraire, (literary ass,)* a pamphlet against Fréron.

"I thought, sire, that I could not serve you better than by making good the treason of which one of your lieutenants had been guilty."

"Very good, but do not try it again. Besides, stratagem is not treason."

"Ah! sire, Monsieur d'Ambly pronounced judgment upon himself!"

"The wretched man!" cried the king, for his imagination was always painfully impressed by any mention of sudden deaths, suicide, apoplexy, or assassination. He did not like to feel himself so near to God, eternity, hell.

"Let us begin," he resumed.

He took his seat. Half the saloon, left empty, was to serve as the stage. There were neither decorations nor costumes.

They commenced. André, the galley slave, is walking alone upon the sands.

"The rising sun on this far, desert shore,
Has never seemed so beautiful as now.
Smooth is the sparkling sea; the cloudless heaven
Smiles on the mariner a day of rest.
For me, alas! are no more smiling days;
Shipwrecked, alone, what—what to me is calm!
I all have lost; hope I no longer have!
Thou Lord, see'st all; Thou know'st if I complain.
This heavy chain I bear, the badge of crime
And punishment, to my poor heart is dear;
Its weight I joy to feel, etc."

These verses, which are meant to be simple, and are only pretentious, were recited by Marigny with a real and heartfelt simplicity, which made them almost touching. He excelled in putting nature in the place of art—the true in place of the false.

The duke d'Orleans, who succeeded him, made laudable efforts to be simpler and more true to nature than his silly char-

acter. But it was a curious affair, to hear a prince of the blood, in the presence of the king of France, declaiming against nobility and the nobles. True, Boileau had ventured upon it in the time of Louis XIV., but what was then a mere *jeu d'esprit*, a sally without any particular tendency, had now, through the influence of the new ideas, become something far more aggressive. We are surprised at the present day, to see what the greatest lords of an hundred years ago could listen to without indignation.

This liberality, it is very true, was in reality only one of the proofs of their insensibility. The most hardened sinners are those who are least angered by the liberty of speech used from the pulpit. Thus it was in those days, in respect to the liberties of speech employed by philosophy. They all applauded precisely because they fancied themselves very sure of never having to pay any positive regard to them. Inequality appeared too firmly established by laws and customs for them to see any danger in allowing equality to be talked of, or in speaking of it themselves.

And accordingly, it was with the most perfect air of conviction imaginable, that the duke d'Orleans recited these lines:

"O dearest love! . . . . . .
In vain is our devotion . . . .
O barbarous uncle! Thy unjust ideas
Alone have power to separate our hearts!
My chosen one not noble? Blasphemy!
Nobility is naught or virtue 'tis.
Such wretched sophistry I groan to hear,
The folly of the world I groan to see,
Which gropes in graves and questions e'en the dead
If those who live may justly claim our love
What! Do they tell me I demean myself
Espousing beauty, virtue, wit and love?
No!—*pride* invented vain nobility,
To take the place of these . . . . . ."

And this was all the fashion at court as well as in the city, in these days, when a commoner in the army could not aspire to anything more than the shoulder knot of a sergeant.

L.

THE MARQUISE.—BLINDNESS OR INDIFFERENCE.

It was the turn of the marquise. She recited as she sang, with real talent. Her only fault was that she was no longer young; but it was only so much the more wonderful that she knew so well how still to appear so. The most youthful parts suited her admirably; she only felt the weight of years from the efforts which she was forced to make in order not to appear to see them. She groaned in secret, moreover, at this obligation to remain forever young. "I must die a Montespan," she seemed to say, "for with a king like this, there can be no Maintenon."

This time, it is true, she was not forced to be so young. The Cécile of Feuonillot is a very grave, sententious person, a saint *à la Diderot*, in short; and these women are of no age.

And so she went on bravely, at the risk of being caught on the way, poor woman, by some of the aphorisms which she herself scattered before her steps. "Of all feelings," for instance, she was obliged to say:

"Love is most fair, hallowed by virtue's smile,"

which, as we may see, was very edifying from the lips of a mistress, and in the presence of a worn out old king.

But who was going to let himself be stopped by ideas? He would have been forced, in that case, to be stopped by the picture of the sufferings of the Protestants, which was here traced, and this would have led him still further. No one dreamed

of doing so; no one, save the marquis de Narniers thought of reflecting that these things were realities for a million of Frenchmen. This thoughtlessness was of long standing. When Louis XIV., in the midst of his greatest severities against the Protestants, was moved, at Saint-Cyr, by the narrative of the sufferings of the Jews under a bloody minister and a deceived prince, no voice either in his heart or his ear, whispered that he was this king, and that these oppressed subjects were his. And why, moreover, should we be surprised that the allusion escaped him, when the poet himself either failed to feel, or hastened to disavow it? The very year of the revocation, Racine called Louis XIV.,

"The wisest, and most perfect of mankind."

It was about the same epoch that La Fontaine, the good man, publicly congratulated him upon having reduced "heresy to the last extremity." Do not ask, then, why kings had no ears; ask, rather, why those who approached them had no hearts?

LI.

AN INTERRUPTION.

And so the piece went on, as well as might be. D'Olban, the misanthrope, had made them laugh now and then, but upon the whole, the plot was unravelled without any accident, and take it all in all, the play left no other impression than that of good honest *ennui*.

Richelieu, for his part, found it terribly long. His uneasiness went on increasing. He feared, yet wished, for the moment when he must appear in his turn before this small but redoubtable audience.

"You seem quite agitated, Richelieu," said Louis XV. to him in a low voice.

"Ah, sire, I do not tremble so much before your enemies."

"Well answered. But the reply is not original."

"Neither are the stupid things which I am about to have the honor of declaiming in your Majesty's presence. I shudder to think of it."

"Pooh! But hush. Listen.—The marquise is going to faint presently."

And in fact, the scene drew near.

ANDRÉ.

* * * * * *

"Poor and obscure because we worship God,
After a manner now proscribed in France—"

CÉCILE.

"What! you were one of those, whose differing faith—
Ah! I breathe again.
Doubtless from him I may some knowledge gain.
Say, know'st thou Lisimon?"

ANDRÉ.

"My father he,
Madam—"

CÉCILE.

"Thy father! André! hapless man!"

ANDRÉ.

"Good Heavens! That name: What do I hear? 'Tis she!"

AMÉLIE.

"Ha! she has swooned. Ho! Frontin, ho! Fernelle,
Hasten—"

So they hastened; and Madame de Pompadour, supported by Amélie, fainted away in her best style.

But suddenly, masters and valets paused. The cardinal de la Roche-Aymon, the royal chaplain, had just been perceived at the entrance of the saloon.

The king grew pale. The cardinal, evidently agitated, approached him.

"Sire," he said, "the decrees of God are inscrutable. A heavy blow is about to fall, has perhaps already fallen upon your house. The duke de Bourgoyne, the eldest of your grandsons—"

"Well?" cried the king.

"Is dying."

The child had met with a fall some time previous, having been pushed down by one of his playmates. A wound had been inflicted upon his head, which had been neglected, but which was now declared mortal.

He died the same evening. The duke de Berry, his brother, became heir to the throne. The duke de Berry was Louis XVI.

What would this child have been, had he lived? A Louis XIV. or a Louis XV.? Would he have braved the torrent, or have been carried away by it, as it carried away Louis XVI.? God only knows! If he had lived, perhaps he would have suppressed the French revolution, at least such as we have seen it, and the Republic, and the Empire, and all that grew out of these, all that is still growing out of them.

In the great occurrences ordered by Providence, the smallness of the means is often still more striking than the immensity of the results. Two children are playing; one pushes the other down,—and the face of the land is revolutionized.

LII.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.—POLICY OF THE JESUITS.

In the meantime signs of change heralded the coming revolution. The flood was about to cross one of the strongest dykes which the old condition of society had opposed to the encroachments of the new. The Jesuits at length heard the sound of their death-knell.

It is their fate, as we have said in our first volume, always to be guilty, and yet always to be unjustly punished.

At the time when we left them, they were about to appeal to the Parliament of Paris against the decrees which had condemned the order to pay the debts of one of its members, Father Lavalette, who had been at first enriched, and then ruined by trading with the Antilles.

Right was on their side. No civil solidarity existed, or had ever existed between their various establishments. Each of these, like other orders, had its property, its own administration; each, in France, authorized by special letters patent, had received from royal authority, by that very fact, a distinct individuality. The superintendence exercised by the general over all the property of the order, was manifestly not sufficient to make of this property a single domain, and of the whole order a civil institution.

In a moral point of view, however, things of course wore quite a different aspect. The gains of Father Lavalette had been for the profit of the whole order; the whole order, accordingly, ought to support his losses.

Prudence, in default of conscience and honor, should have dictated such a law to them. And yet, the more serious this

mistake, the more must we reflect before formally accusing them of it. In the face of such imminent danger, it is incredible that such a clear-sighted body should have made a point of a few hundreds of thousands of francs. Accordingly, their obstinacy only proved their confidence in their own right; and when—condemned by the tribunals of commerce, they had dared to appeal to the Parliament of Paris, which they knew to be almost unanimous against them, it was a solemn, —we had almost said, an honorable and chivalric,—appeal to the loyalty of their adversaries.

This appeal was not destined to be heeded. The parliament did not perceive that by beginning with an act of justice, it would only gain a better right to be severe afterwards. Their passion and prejudice had reached a point where all calculation, even in their own interest, seemed to them but time wasted.

Consequently, on the 8th of May, 1761, they made a decree —"Condemning the general, and, in his person, the order and society of the Jesuits, to pay as well the principle, as the interest and expenses of the agreements which had not yet been paid; in default of which, the said general and society should remain responsible," etc., etc.

But on the 17th of April, the parliament had taken their first step in the new path, upon which it had been impossible for them any longer to defer entering. Even before pronouncing upon the civil question, they had laid the foundations of a religious and political suit. An order had been given to the provincial to deposit in the bureau a copy of the constitution of the Jesuits, and three councillors, Chauvelin at their head, had been deputed to examine it.

LIII.

CHAUVELIN'S REPORTS.

In the first report given, Chauvelin reviewed it rapidly. He boldly sketched the plan of its tremendous unity. One is tempted to inquire now and then whether he most admires or criticizes. It is easily seen that he is forced to make an effort to abstain from openly rendering homage to the genius of Loyola.

It must be confessed, that in spite of the grandeur of its style, his work lacks philosophy and elevation. The State, the king, the security of the State, the rights of the king, these are all that the ardent abbé, often with a puerile emphasis, is able to perceive endangered by the Jesuits; to this he has brought down the whole question.

But is this the true question? We have already showed that it is not. The rights of government are indeed to be considered; the safety of States is important; but the rights of man, that is, of his conscience and his reason, are more important still; they are the most essential, they are everything. It is these, then, before all else, to which Jesuitism must be shown to be inimical; these, it is but too easy to prove, are misled, or destroyed, by all the laws which Jesuitism makes or has ever made.

The same remark may be made in regard to the second report of the abbé de Chauvelin, that in which he treats of the morals of the Jesuits. His accusations in detail are numerous, earnest, sometimes daring, sometimes irrefutable; it is Pascal in parliamentary costume; Pascal, with more erudition, and sometimes with almost as much acuteness.

But in this mass of crimes, which the author takes such pains to collect, the real crime, the crime of every day, of every hour, the fundamental crime of the Jesuits, that in which the wisest and most virtuous, as well as the most foolish and plotting among them, must assist,—namely, the enfeebling of the moral sense, the annihilation of freewill and of all noble motives of action,—this great crime is scarcely adverted to.

It is true that this fault rather aided than hindered the success of the report. Had he been more profound in his perceptions, and filled with a more Christian indignation against so anti-Christian a code of morals, Chauvelin would have been less comprehended by this superficial and unchristian age. It was necessary that his revelations should possess the attraction of scandal, and that the fashionable ladies should have his report upon their toilettes, beside the romances of the day.

And, accordingly, this species of success had not been lacking. From one end of France to the other, nothing was talked of but him and his memorial; from one end of France to the other—for must not France always laugh a little even at those in whose honor she burns incense?—the lines found one morning upon the walls of the *Palais de Justice*, were repeated:

> "How odd your fate, oh Jesuits, the present era shows;
> A limping man established you;—a humpback overthrows!"

LIV.

CLOSE CONNECTION BETWEEN ROYALTY AND JESUITISM.

The overthrow of the society was then the object which was at length avowed. The most timid now spoke openly of that which the boldest had at first only conceived in silence.

Thenceforward, it was not the Jesuits alone who were con-

cerned in the cause. Royalty was cited to appear with them before the bar of the parliament.

It was in fact from royalty that the society had received authority to exist in France. The parliaments, as courts of justice, possessed the indisputable right of jurisdiction over individuals. That of Paris, had possessed the power, in a civil process, to condemn the society as a body, and the judgment, although unjust, was legal. But to dissolve it, would be undoing what kings had done, it would be usurping the king's place.

Louis XV. had felt this. He had even upon this occasion had one of his rare spells of energy and dignity. In spite of the duke de Choiseul and Madame de Pompadour, he had, on the 2d of August, sent an order to the parliament to suspend the trial commenced, for a year.

The parliament, encouraged by the duke de Choiseul, had at first declined registering the edict, and subsequently registered it while evading it. "It shall be delayed for a year," said the decree, "to pass any other judgments upon the order, save those in regard to which the oath of the Court of Justice, their love for their lord the king, and their attention to public tranquillity, do not permit them to use any hesitation or delay." This was more than an encroachment; it was almost a sarcasm. But the king never could *will* two days in succession. He was silent, and the parliament had their own way.

Then, by a solemn decree, the attorney-general "was permitted to appeal, as against abuses, against all bulls, briefs, and apostolical letters touching the priests and scholars of the society known as that of Jesus."

Thus, while feigning to obey the king, they attacked the pope. The question had grown more, instead of less important. It was no longer the State against the Church, but the

Church against the Church itself, which the parliament claimed to have a mission to protect.

And from whom had it received this mission? Not from the crown, since the king ordered its proceedings to be suspended; still less from the Church, since the pope and the bishops, the legitimate organs of the Church, were notoriously in favor of the Jesuits. Were they at least urged on by conscience and reason? In that case they would have begun by breaking with the Church. If a Protestant, on his own individual authority, should attack and condemn the Jesuits, he would be consistent with himself and his principles; but, that a Catholic,—and the question remains at the present day the same that it was in 1761,—that a Catholic, we say, still calling himself a Catholic, should consider it admissible to find fault with that of which thirty popes have approved, to lay hands upon something which the body of bishops are nearly unanimous now as then in sustaining, against and in spite of all, is one of the strangest contradictions into which the human mind has ever allowed itself to be drawn. This has been the cause —for every false position leads to violence and falsehood—of so much injustice in regard to a subject where severity need not have been unjust; this has been the cause of so many calumnies against an order which, less calumniated, but attacked in the name of broad moral principles, would have been more certainly overthrown.

LV.

STEADFAST AND DISINGENUOUS.

In the meantime, a committee appointed by the king, was occupied in examining the constitution of the Jesuits. It was said that Louis XV. hoped they would come to a favorable

conclusion. At one time he believed that this was the case, for they confined themselves to requiring a few modifications of the statutes, particularly in those relating to the authority exercised by the general of the order throughout the kingdom. But there had been but one voice in the whole order, to refuse any alteration. *Sint ut sunt, aut non sint*, the general had already said once before; *sint ut sunt, aut non sint*, was repeated from China to Rome, from Rome to the deserts of America, by all who had sworn by Loyola. Looked upon as obstinacy by some, as noble firmness by others, their motive was perhaps neither so exalted nor so degraded as has been believed. It was nothing more than common sense. They perceived that the hatred against them was so intense, that they could not hope to get rid of their assailants by means of a few concessions. Moreover, in a system so completely bound together, there can be no such thing as an unimportant concession, any more than there can be a stone removed from an arch without danger.

At last, advised by the committee, the king had consulted the clergy, and on the thirtieth of November, fifty-one prelates had assembled at Paris. Even before the result of their deliberations was known, it was not to be doubted that they would decide for the Jesuits. It was known beforehand, that five or six, at most, would require modifications in the laws, and that one only, Monsieur de Fitz-James, bishop of Soissons, would vote for the suppression of the order.

But on the very day after that on which the bishops assembled to absolve the Jesuits, a new voice was raised for their condemnation. It was at Rennes. This was the residence of the attorney-general of the parliament of Brittany, him whom we heard ask the abbé de Chauvelin nearly eighteen months since: "When are we to begin?" Chauvelin had begun;

his friend followed. Calmer in his manner of expressing himself, and with broader views, La Chalotais had succeeded in gaining over those who distrusted the tirades of Chauvelin. Their names were thenceforward inseparable in the admiration of the public, as well as the hatred of those whom they had attacked.

And thereupon, in place of keeping that silence which, in the midst of so many attacks, had given them an appearance of dignity in their misfortunes, the Jesuits had broken it on the 19th of December, by a proceeding which could only contribute still further to their ruin.

In reply to four questions which the king had put to the assembly of bishops concerning them, they declared :

That they fully acknowledged the temporal independence of kings, the sacredness of their persons, and the inviolability of the oaths by which their subjects are bound to them ;

That they should always teach, in public as in private, the four Gallican articles of 1682 ;

That they acknowledged the bishops to possess the same rights of jurisdiction over them as over the other orders ;

And finally, that if the general of their order should give any commands at variance with these declarations, they would refuse to obey him.

These few words contained all that their enemies could desire to bring forward against them ; a perjury and several falsehoods.

A perjury, we say, for bound by so absolute a vow of obedience as theirs, it was plain that they broke it by supposing occasions when they should not obey it.

Falsehoods, we may add ; and this was still more evident. That which they promised to teach, was the contrary of those doctrines which they had always been known to believe, of

those things which they had taught, if not always, at least whenever they had been able. The Jesuits were not, and could not be sincere in asserting their submission to the decrees of 1682, the source of such endless mortification to the popes. It was moreover remarked, that they did not promise to admit, but only to teach them; a subterfuge, it must be confessed, which served admirably to support the accusations made against them in respect to their mental reservations, and compromises with heaven.

This publication was to mark the beginning of their overthrow. Within a few days, they could perceive its effect. It deprived them of their most honorable friends in the world, while it shocked all those in the Church who were sincerely and frankly ultramontanist. They were justly represented as ready to betray either party as soon as their own interest might require it.

LVI.

SECRET INFLUENCE OF THE ENCYCLOPEDISTS UPON THESE MATTERS.

This was the state of affairs, towards the end of 1771. The hand of God, concealed beneath the injustice of man, weighed heavily upon the Jesuits. Conscience and reason, which they had trampled under foot, now rose against them, but embittered and falsified,—ready, in order to overthrow their oppressors, to pollute themselves with all the treacheries of which these were accused. The magistracy made themselves popular at their expense; the king saw the abyss,—was terrified at it for a moment, then fell back again into his slumber.

The solution of all this, is to be found neither in the memo-

rials of the one party, nor the replies of the other. The parliament drew the chesnuts from among the hot ashes; more powerful personages profited by this. The Encyclopedists laughed slyly. Let the Jesuits first be overthrown by the Jansenists, then the Jansenists would fall sure enough, beneath the blows of *their* adversaries. This was the wish, the hope, the future certainty of all the enemies of religion. So far back as the commencement of the struggle, Voltaire wrote that he wished he could behold every Jansenist in the sea, "each one with a Jesuit about his neck." As the quarrel became more bitter, he returned to this charitable wish, enlivening it by the most poetic varieties of expression. Diderot had spoken of strangling the last of kings with the entrails of the last of priests. Voltaire was jealous of this pretty figure of speech, and stole it from him. "Could not we bring things to an amicable termination," he writes Helvétius,* "by a well-meaning and moderate proposal to strangle the last Jesuit with the entrails of the last Jansenist?" Elsewhere,† "I would die content," he says, "if I could see the Jansenists and the Molinists mutually destroy one another." And in another letter:‡ "Never has there been a more propitious season for the cultivation of the Lord's vineyard. Our enemies are tearing each other to pieces. It is for us to fire upon these wild beasts, while they are attacking one another, and we can take aim at our leisure." D'Alembert is less picturesque in his expressions; he is only brutal, as he always is when he dares to be so. "The parliament," he writes Voltaire,§ "is engaged in a bloody war against the Jesuits, and Paris is far more occupied with it than with the war in Germany. As for myself, I like

* May 11th, 1761.

† Letter to the Comtesse de Lutzelbourg, 28th December, 1759.

‡ Letter to Damilaville, Jan. 26th, 1762. § Sept. 8th, 1761.

neither the parliamentary fanatics nor the fanatics of Saint-Ignatius, so all I wish is, that the one set may destroy the other. Perhaps the time is drawing near when philosophy is to be revenged upon the Jesuits. Let us hope that the destruction of the Jesuitical mob may bring with it that of the mob of Jansenists and bigots."

LVII.

CALUMNY REFUTED.

But the *mob* of bigots had still a last effort to make. Let us return to Toulouse, where it was particularly active. Was it not their business now to atone to God, but more especially to the Pope, for their misdeeds against the Jesuit soldiers of the church?

We left Rabaut at Pont-de-Montvert, at Reboul's house. When the search for him had been discontinued and the sentinels withdrawn, he quitted his place of concealment.

And now he was once more in Toulouse, where, although invisible, he continued to direct all the efforts made for the liberation of the pastor Rochette, the brothers Grenier, and the family Calas. His *Calumny Refuted*, although now printed, had not yet been distributed.

"If you will take my advice," said Monsieur de la Salle, his friend, who kept him informed of everything that took place in the parliament—"if you will take my advice, you will not distribute this pamphlet. The more I read it, the more it seems to me it should be kept for calmer times."

"What! the defence after the condemnation?"

"The condemnation has not yet been pronounced."

"It is about to be pronounced."

"I fear so; but still, all hope is not yet lost. If your pamphlet should become public, the condemnation is almost certain."

"Is there a single word in it at which the parliament could reasonably take offence?"

"Reasonably,—no! But what matters that? They will be all the more vexed on that very account. The cause of annoyance in this pamphlet is not this or that sentence or page, but it is the whole thing, from the first word to the last. Reasons are often more offensive than insults. What is smoother than oil? But attempt to pour it on the fire—"

"And you believe that matters have gone so far?"

"I do not only *believe* it, I am sure of it. Think what you have heard only to-day. Never has the passionate obstinacy of the one party, and the weakness of the other, been more scandalously evident. Monsieur de Bonrepos* seems to feel as if he would be ruined, dishonored, if he did not succeed in obtaining the blood which he demands. These two trials have become his whole business, his life. He reflects no longer —he does not care to reflect. He goes headlong to work, like the soldier who has no business to trouble himself whether the war is unjust or not."

"I see, from that, that you have not laid my request before him!"

"You are mistaken."

"Well?"

"He grants it."

"And you have not told me before?"

"I was in hopes that you would not speak of it again."

"Why?"

"Believe me, you had better not go into that prison."

* Attorney-General.

"Do you distrust him?"

"No! He is violent, but not treacherous."

"Well, then—"

"You might be recognized by some subaltern who would think that he was doing a great service in arresting you."

"If I only went where I was sure of not being arrested, where should I go?"

"So you are determined?"

"Yes! It shall not be said that our brethren depended on me in vain, to aid them in preparing for death."

"Well, go. Here is the pass which will open the doors to you. There is a blank space for the name. Put in any that you like, excepting *Tuabar*, for that is beginning to be too well known. And what do you decide about your pamphlet?"

"Nothing, as yet, I will see what our prisoners think of it."

LVIII.

FOUR PRISONERS.

It was the first of January, 1762.

A solemn day that which ushers in a new year! Solemn for him who hopes to behold the end of the year—solemn above all, for him who knows he shall not behold it!

And this minister, and these three brothers who expected from day to day to hear their condemnation, well knew, they could no longer doubt, that this was their case. If they were surprised at anything, it was to find themselves still among the living, for they had not imagined, from the rapid manner in which their trial had been hurried on in the beginning, that they were to be made to sit for so long a time in the shadow of death.

For some weeks past they had been allowed to see each other. They passed several hours of each day together. They had constructed for themselves within the walls of their prison, a world in which faith, peace, and friendship reigned undisturbed. At last, they trusted so entirely in God, that they no longer remembered that their fate depended also upon the words of men.

On this day they had obtained permission to be together in the morning. They had silently exchanged greetings. Tears, which they strove to conceal from one another, rose to their eyes. The first day of their last year of life! And the oldest of them had not yet numbered thirty years! And their consoler, Rochette, was but twenty-six!

But towards noon they had all resumed their usual serenity. They were seated, conversing cheerfully around their humble table, which was covered with a meal brought from without. Unknown friends had prepared a dinner for the prisoners.

"Quite a feast!" said the minister.

"I half expected it," said one of the brothers. "This is a season when people remember their friends."

"Yes," said the elder, "they generally remember those whom they may need; as for those from whom they cannot possibly expect anything—"

"And is nothing expected from us, brother?"

"What can be expected, child?"

"That we should die nobly!"

"True, brother, true. Thou wilt not be the one to disappoint them."

And thus every moment returned this idea with which they had now so completely familiarized themselves.

The same resignation characterized them all, modified only by the difference of their characters. The eldest was a grave

man, naturally gloomy, and almost as much of a stoic as a Christian. The youngest, on the contrary, was endowed with that happy gayety which does not exclude deep feeling and serious thoughts. About twenty years of age, he had always seemed older and younger than he was;—younger, on account of his manner, which was that of a child; and older, because of his steadfastness, which was that of a man inured to trials, and of a Christian whose strength is in God.

In the other, philosophy and faith, better proportioned, formed a more regularly Christian character. He had neither the impassibility of the one, nor the youthful ardor of the other. He had neither braved nor despised trials,—he accepted them. Accordingly, he particularly sympathized with the minister, whose state of mind resembled his own. Besides, they were of the same age, and had been acquainted since childhood. And thus their similar fate appeared to them like a sign from heaven, that their souls should be more and more united.

The same mutual sympathy which was brought about in their case by conformity of character and sentiment, had been caused in the other two by their very dissimilarity. The elder and younger brothers, who, one would have thought, could not have lived together, could not, on the contrary, endure to be separated a moment. The elder seemed, indeed, wearied by the continual vivacity of the younger,—and the latter oppressed by his brother's unvarying gravity; but each felt, as it were, a necessity to complete his own character by means of that of the other, and to live as much as possible in the other, while both still retained their individuality.

LIX.

ACCOUNT OF A DISCUSSION WITH FATHER BOURGES.

The four were at length seated at table, and for the first time were left alone. They had often begged this favor, but in vain. A gaoler was present at all their interviews.

"Alone!" said Jean de Lourmade,* when he perceived the favor done them. "Ah! friends, you see they begin to indulge our wishes. It appears that we are very dangerously ill—"

"Alone!" said Jean de Sarradou; "and we have knives moreover! The gaoler pretended that such a thing was never allowed."

"You owe it to me," said the minister. "I asked him if he thought we looked like people who were likely to commit suicide, and he seemed to perceive that the precaution was in fact useless in our case."

"It seems to me," said one of the brothers, "that these people must be astonished themselves, at the confidence with which we inspire them. And I might say the same thing of our judges as of our gaolers. Do you observe the tone in which they speak to us? It is almost respectful. It seems to me, that if I were obliged to judge people who suffered for the sake of their religion, and if, in spite of myself, these people inspired me with a feeling of respect, I should find it difficult to hate their religion."

"On the contrary," said Rochette, "that is the very thing which they cannot forgive us, since it is an argument to which

* The younger. According to the custom of the province, they bore three different names, The elder was called Grenier, Sieur de Commel: the second, Grenier, Sieur de Sarradon.

they find no reply. In vain have they crushed and persecuted us; they have never succeeded in degrading us. Our people are still superior to theirs—"

"And our clergy to theirs," interrupted de Commel.

"Yes, thank God," continued the minister. "The Reformation announced itself as a flaming torch. This it has truly been—"

"And will ever be," cried the brothers.

"And happy are they, my friends, who shall have held this torch high and with a steady hand."

"As we shall hold it upon the scaffold."

"God grant it!"

They talked of other things.

"Father Bourges has not been here for two days," said the minister.

"Yes, we had him yesterday," said de Commel.

"I never saw him more embarrassed than he was the day before yesterday," resumed Rochette.

"Perhaps that is the reason he does not trouble you again."

"Did he expect to succeed better with you?"

"If he did," replied Jean de Lourmade, "he discovered his mistake."

"Come, Jean," said the eldest brother, "tell us something about your discussion."

"You heard it brother."

"I know,—but Monsieur Rochette did not."

The grave Grenier de Commel was delighted to have it seen how cleverly his quick-witted young brother had managed his dispute with the fat Dominican.

"We must hear all about it," said Rochette.

"Upon one condition," replied Jean, "namely, that afterwards you shall relate your discussion."

"We shall see. But go on, in the meanwhile."

"Well, the good old fellow made his appearance, with his great corporosity, and—"

"Jean," said the eldest brother, severely, "if you jest in that manner I will retire."

"And where will you go to, my poor brother? The door is shut and double-locked. Ah! if I had nothing to do but to jest in order to send you far enough from here—"

He sighed.

"But to continue," he resumed. "Father Bourges arrived, as usual, gentle in word, inexorable in deed and doctrine. 'Well, my child,' he said, 'you are about to finish this year as you begun it, alas! this year during which God has put in your way so many of the means of salvation! I would not have believed that on Saint Sylvester's day—'

"'What is Saint Sylvester's day, Monsieur?' I asked. Mind you, I knew very well.

"'Saint Sylvester's day, my child, is the thirty-first of December, the fête day of a great saint, of a pope—'

"'All the popes are saints.'

"'We never have asserted that.'

"'Do you not call them all *Votre Sainteté*, your holiness?'

"'A title,—a mere form.'

"'Yes? And their infallibility?'

"'Their infallibility, my child, is another thing. From the moment that this privilege was granted to the see of Rome, it was necessary that all—'

"'Necessary, certainly, in order that the whole system should not crumble. But when an Alexander VI.—'

"'There you are!—forever talking of Alexander VI.!'

"'You know very well that it is not on account of any difficulty in finding others among the popes whom I might mention.'

"'No—unhappily. But why should you always select the worst? You see nothing of the sort at the present day. The present pope, Clement XIII.—'

"'Is better, I acknowledge; but even if he were worse,—although I acknowledge that this would be difficult,—he would none the less be pope, and you would none the less be obliged to believe and to profess that the Holy Spirit speaks by his words.'

"'Why should you make any such supposition?'

"'You will not allow me to make suppositions? Very well, permit me to state facts, then, and do not prevent my mentioning Alexander VI. It makes no difference whether there have been ten, or one, or one hundred popes like him, or whether or not there is ever such another to exist. You are none the less obliged to maintain that God has spoken, or might still speak by the lips of such abominable men.'

"'*His ways are not as our ways*, says the Scripture. He has done many other things which we are tempted to call unwarrantable, unjust—'

"Undoubtedly; but before deciding that these things which appear so bad to us, are really good, we have a right to inquire whether they actually come from God. It is not only a right, but a duty, for it would be impious to set to his account all that ambition or ignorance may have attributed to him. Accordingly, choose, Monsieur. Either let us talk of the bad popes, and of the monstrous absurdity of a system in which they are of necessity as infallible as the best;—or let us get at the truth of the matter, and inquire whether the best have actually been better than the others.'

"'*Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram*—'

"'There we are! I may say, too,—as you did just now apropos of Alexander VI.—'

"'*Tu es Petrus*—'

"'O, I beg that you will put mere words aside. These, I know, have a great effect upon those who only know as much of the Scripture as certain people choose to tell them; but you are aware that we know it by heart.'

"'You have the book,—but you have not the torch which sheds the light of understanding—'

"'And this torch is?'

"'Tradition.'

"'Pardon me. In this matter it is precisely to Tradition that I appeal.'

"'I should like to know—'

"'Yes, Monsieur, to tradition; to the oldest, moreover, and the most trustworthy.'

"'Which is?'

"'The Scripture itself. To it alone, the history of the first thirty or thirty-five years of the Church, it seems to me it is most natural to go for an explanation of these words. Now will you allow me to ask you one or two very simple questions, without going any further?'

"There are no simple questions for Father Bourges. He has generally a wonderful facility of entangling them. So I took my precautions; I wished to force him to answer *yes* or *no*.

"'Go on, my son,' he said, 'go on.'

"'You quote certain words,' I said; 'it is in regard to these words that I wish to question you in the first place. Can you point out to me a single passage in the New Testament in which Saint Peter is called the head of the Church?'

"'What if I cannot, since he *is* really its head?'

"'That is another question; we shall come to that. I told you beforehand that we should begin with words. The words *Head of the Church* have been employed in speaking of Saint Peter?'

"'No!' he replied.

"'Or *chief of the apostles?*' I continued.

"'No!' he repeated.

"'Well, Monsieur, from these two questions to which you have answered *no*, I draw a third: Can it reasonably be supposed that the book of Acts, and so many epistles, that the whole New Testament, in short, would not once have given Saint Peter a title which belonged to him? And do you imagine that while you now cannot write a page or a line upon his pretended successor, without being led to declare his quality of head of the church,—do you imagine that a whole volume would have been written in which this title was not once inserted by the authors?'

"'We do not know,' he objected, 'whether we have all the apostles wrote.'

"'It is possible,' I resumed, 'but come, I appeal to your conscience, to your inmost soul. Do you really think we have so few of their writings as to make it natural—Saint Peter being the head of the church—that the title is never once found in them? Do you really believe that Saint Paul would have written his long epistle to the *Romans*, without even mentioning him? Or that this same Saint Paul could have addressed so many counsels and orders of all kinds, to so many churches, without saying a word of any tie whatever established or to be established, between Saint Peter or any of his successors? No! Monsieur, no! In the sight of God, and from your conscience, you cannot say *yes*.'

"His embarrassment was evident. I may say, indeed, that I never yet met with a Catholic who was bold enough to face the question thus presented. The more they assert that there must be a head—that there is one, and always has been one—the more they will be troubled to explain why the famous *Tu es Petrus* was never referred to by any of the apostles."

LX.

TRADITION.

"And you might have added," said the minister, "that the *Tu es Petrus* is only found in one of the gospels. If these words had possessed, in the eyes of the apostles, that importance which was afterwards given them, how can we explain their omission by three of the four historians of Jesus Christ?"

"That is significant enough, in truth," said Jean de Lourmade. "I never remarked that, and I think it must have escaped our controversialists. Why did I not know it yesterday! But, pooh! what should I have gained by it? These people are so armed against all evidence, that there is no more to be gained by ten arguments than by one.

"In the meantime, he made scarcely any answers, for I took good care to advance nothing but the most incontrovertible facts. I bewildered him with short, direct questions, which he could not possibly evade. I asked him, for instance, if he could recall any occasion upon which one apostle was reproved or blamed by another?

"'Yes,' he replied.

"'And the apostle blamed, was?'—

"'Was Saint Peter!'

"'Good. At what period, pray?'

"'I do not exactly recollect.'

"'The date is in the epistle to the Galatians. It was fourteen years, Monsieur, fourteen years after the first journey of Saint Paul to Jerusalem, at a period when Christians and Christian churches were to be seen everywhere, and when the supremacy of Saint Peter might have found a thousand opportunities of being exercised, and yet, Saint Paul says that he

withstood him, and "to the face, because he was to be blamed." Does he at least excuse himself for having resisted the head of the church? Not at all. Neither there nor anywhere else, is there a word or a syllable which might indicate that Saint Paul regards himself or was regarded by others as inferior to Saint Peter.'

"I dwelt for some time," continued Jean de Lourmade, "upon this entirely negative aspect of our anti-Romanist controversies. The more improbabilities I mentioned, the more occurred to me. I never could understand how any honest man can help being convinced by this silence of the scriptures in regard to the prerogatives of Saint Peter, by the entire independence of the other apostles of his control, by the utter absence, in short, of any appeal, or even of the slightest allusion to any visible chief.

"At last, the priest began to interrupt me every moment. 'But tradition,' he cried—'tradition,' as they all cry. 'Tradition,' I replied, 'why, once more, I repeat, here it is! Here is the tradition of the first thirty years of the Church. Here it is written, authentic, unchangeable. And the best proof that it does not testify in your favor, is your continual eagerness to appeal to I don't know what other tradition, which begins no one knows where.'

"'It begins at the apostles,' he said.

"I perceived, from these words, what in fact I already knew, namely, the thickness of the bandage which a desperate position has fastened upon the eyes of our adversaries. The greater number of Catholics proceed just as poor Father Bourges did yesterday. They will not dare to assert that Saint Paul ever talked of the pope; they will not attempt to explain to you how Saint Paul could have written either to the faithful at Rome, or from Rome itself to the Christians of other places,

without making mention of any head, and without mentioning Saint Peter, save in the course of two or three narratives; they will, in short confess—for it amounts to a confession—that thousands of pastors were established, and thousands of churches founded, before a centre or head was spoken of. And yet, they will go to work and quote, as coming direct from the apostles, these same traditions, of which they confess that apostolic times present no trace.

"His sudden facing about was so comical, that I could not help laughing.

"'I see,' said I, 'that I am laboring to fill a leaking vessel. I point you out twenty difficulties and impossibilities. You admit the greater part of them, and then you continue, an instant after, as if I had said and you admitted nothing. I might say a great many other things to you, but why should I? I might ask, particularly, where you find the twenty-five years which you assign to the bishopric of Saint Peter?'

"'We do not vouch for these twenty-five years,' replied Father Bourges.

"'Even if you vouched for five or six,' I resumed, 'I would defy you to justify it. You cannot find three, not two, against which something cannot be argued.'

"And I went on to set before him,—following step by step the chronology of the book of Acts,—all the dates which I had found to contradict the idea of Saint Peter's residence at Rome.

"He wished to stop me at several, which are uncertain according to him, and which, in fact, cannot be positively fixed. 'But,' I said, 'even if our dates should all be uncertain, you would gain nothing by that. At the utmost, you might succeed, by removing the dates a little farther apart, in finding a year or two during which Saint Peter may possibly have made a journey

into Italy, and then you would be obliged to explain how t happens that this journey should not have left the faintest trace in anything which Saint Paul has written to the Romans, or which he wrote from Rome to other churches. But let us stop,' I continued, 'for it seems evident that we are never to come to a conclusion.'

"'Let us stop, since you wish it,' he said. 'So long as God has not yet opened your eyes—'

"'May he open them, if they be indeed shut,' I replied; 'but my arguments were mathematical demonstrations, Monsieur. In the face of such arguments, it seems to me that the one who resists, not the one who employs them, has need of enlightenment.'

"He left me. And now it is your turn, Pastor Rochette."

LXI.

APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION.

"Our discussion," said Rochette, "turned upon a somewhat similar subject. For a long time he had continually been representing to me that I had no right to call myself a minister, and that the apostolic succession preserved by his Church, was the only source of all spiritual power. I resolved, if he approached the subject again, to take the offensive. I wished to make him confess how far the rights of his Church are from being as clear as she fancies, even taking the matter upon their own grounds.

"Day before yesterday, I perceived as he entered, that he was loaded with books.

"'Are these books for me?' I inquired.

"'For you? no. Against you.'

"'Is the Bible among them?'

"'No.'

"'Ah!' I resumed laughing. 'I accept that *no* as a good omen. So the Bible is for me.'

"'Who says so?'

"'You,—since you have not brought it with you. But come. What is the subject for to-day?'

"'The priesthood, so outrageously desecrated by your Church.'

"'Monsieur,' I replied, 'I beg that you will spare me this language. You would be a hard and unmerciful man to employ to one who is to die for having been a minister, and for having confessed that he was one, the same big words which you use in the pulpit in order to make us appear odious or ridiculous.'

"'Very well,' he replied, 'let us be calm; I desire nothing better. Here, in the first place—'

"And he began to turn over the leaves of one of his books.

"'Pardon me,' I said. 'You know that I never consent to leave my ground, the Scriptures, without being forced to do so; forced, be it understood, by arguments. I do not know what you are going to say or quote; but I do not find it necessary to know. Answer, in the first place—'

"'Why in the first place?' he inquired.

"'Because our objections, drawn from the Scriptures, necessarily take precedence of your arguments, which are taken from tradition or from the Fathers.'

"He closed his book. It was, I believe, Saint-Ambrose.

"'Nothing,' I resumed, 'nothing can at first view appear to possess more *unity*, to be more firmly linked together than your hierarchy. One supreme head, the source of all power; subject to him, bishops who only exist through him; subject to the bishops, priests who only exist through them. From the

pope to the village curé, from the village curé to the pope, the line is direct, visible, palpable.

"'Well, the clearer the system, the more we are struck, upon examining it more closely, with the obscurities by which it is in reality encumbered. The straighter and more tightly stretched the chain, the more plainly can we see where the links are wanting.

"'In the first place, I must inquire whether you are ultramontanist or gallican?'

"'What difference does it make?' he said quickly. 'We all recognize the supreme authority of the holy See, and that is sufficient.'

"'Yes,—but how do you recognize it? I know that both parties generally evade all examination into this subject; they feel that they cannot do it without danger of arousing most dangerous quarrels. All recognize the authority of the holy See, you say; but I repeat, *how?* For the ultramontanists, the pope is the necessary and indispensable head of the hierarchy and the Church. All not only proceeds from him, but cannot proceed otherwise than from him. For the gallicans, on the contrary, if he be actually, in fact, the head of the Church, he is not indispensably so. It was by the Church herself, that he was created prince of all priests; it was by her, —order having been necessary,—that he was made supreme dispenser of that power whose source she alone is. In a word, according as you are ultramontanist or gallican, the pope, according to you, will be pope by divine right, or only by ecclesiastical and human right. Once more then I ask which of the two you profess to be?'

"In vain; he would not pronounce for either one. He brought forward many distinctions,—with *ifs* and *buts*, which would have done honor to a Jesuit.

"'Well,' I resumed, 'since I am not permitted to know which of the two you are, allow me to attack both.

"'The gallican is evidently more correct in a historical point of view. Whatever opinion may be professed in regard to the relations existing in the fourth and fifth centuries, between the bishop of Rome and those of the other churches, it is unquestionable that the latter did not receive what was subsequently denominated the *papal institution*. You see them elected here by the people, there by the clergy, elsewhere by the clergy and people united,—everywhere, in short, consecrated and installed by other bishops; and you cannot point out to me a shadow of evidence that the latter needed for this purpose a commission coming from Rome. And remark that I mentioned an epoch when Rome was beginning to be the centre of the Church. If you cannot find this shadow of evi dence in the fourth and fifth centuries, how will it be in the third,—the second! How great would have been the astonishment of the faithful of those days, if it had been told them that their pastors were no pastors at all, because their authority did not emanate from the bishop of Rome!

"'And yet this is what the ultramontanist is forced to uphold, for if anywhere there has ever been even one single generation of pastors, who although not instituted by Saint Peter or his successors, were yet legitimate, then is the chain broken, and legitimacy may exist independent of the pope. One generation, I say, even one generation. And now calculate, if you will venture, calculate how many generations of such there must have been in the four or five centuries of which I was speaking. Or, if you are an ultramontanist, deny,—deny! Blot out all these centuries. Say that Saint Paul was an usurper, a schismatic, when upon his own authority he established so many pastors,—*bishops*, as you call them,—and

then, only then, can you maintain that the Roman hierarchy is a logical and complete whole.

"'More reasonable in a historical point of view, gallican principles are for that reason, only the further from furnishing a system of any solidity or value.

"'In the first place, and this is no small matter, this system is in direct opposition to that which has always been professed by the popes. At Rome, as you know, there is no opinion more unwelcome than that which makes the papacy a charge instituted by the Church, accountable to, and consequently inferior to the Church. The popes have never been contented with being recognized only as heads of the Christian world; they have never failed, when they had opportunity or courage, to condemn those who do not recognize them as having a divine right, an original and necessary supremacy. The gallican who anathematizes us, is accordingly no less opposed to the pope upon this point, than to us.

"It may even be said, that he is more so. For in fact, as soon as you give up supporting the present system as dating from the earliest days of the Church, in what do you differ from us? It is no longer anything but a question of discipline. You prefer one form, and we another, that is all. But between you and the pope, between the gallican and ultramontanist, there is more difference. It is in the name of God himself, it is as a doctrine that the pope teaches his supremacy; therefore, in his eyes, in denying this, you deny a dogma. You pursue us with the greatest severity, although we differ from you only upon an ecclesiastical matter,—and yet you know that you are condemned by your head for rebellion in regard to a point of belief! In whose name then do you tell us that we have desecrated,—that is your word,—the Christian ministry? In the name of the pope? First agree with him

then, for according to him you also desecrate it. In the name of the Church? Why the pope alone is the official and legitimate organ of the Church. And moreover, she has never regularly decided upon these points. Everything concerning the priesthood, its nature, the papacy considered as the source of spiritual authority, the relations it bears to the episcopacy, and the origin of the present system, all these, after lengthy debates, were carefully omitted from the decrees of the council of Trent.'

"This," continued Rochette, "is the substance of my reply to Father Bourges. If I have not repeated to you any of the objections which he attempted to make, it is because he did not shake,—and how could he?—one of the facts which I brought forward. And so long as they remain, what becomes of the subtleties by which people endeavor to get rid of their consequences? However, I believe that Father Bourges is a worthy man. He is not an ultramontanist, for he did not uphold the absolute authority of the pope; he is not a gallican, for he appeared to feel sensibly enough all that I said of the difficulties and inconsistencies of gallicanism. What then is he? What I believe the greater number of sincere priests must be. Hesitating, struggling, shocked at the pretensions of Rome, and yet, on the other hand, terrified by the false and illogical position risked by every Catholic, who does not fully submit,—they close their eyes, they will not allow themselves to reflect, they strive to persuade themselves by attacking us, that they are still the friends and champions of the pope."

LXII.

MONSIEUR THÉO, THE MERCHANT.

As Rochette spoke, the gaoler reëntered.

"Well, gentlemen," he exclaimed, "do you complain to-day? You have been left together for a long time, I think."

"Thanks!" replied the prisoners. "It was really a delightful day."

"And it is not yet at an end," resumed the man.

"We hope so, indeed."

"And if it finished still more pleasantly, what then? If one of your friends—"

"Who?" they asked. "It is not our day for visitors."

"By special permission."

"Some one to convert us, I suppose."

"It is much more probable that he needs converting himself."

"Who told you so?"

"Oh!—his air,—and—"

"Indeed! And his name?"

"Monsieur Théo, a merchant."

"Théo," said Rochette. "Théo.—An old friend,—yes. He is welcome."

Rochette appeared calm, but his voice trembled.

"Théo!" he said, after the gaoler had gone out. "Théo,—my friends! But you do not seem to know! It is one of his surnames.—It is he—"

Rabaut entered, accompanied by a young man. The door was again closed. Rochette threw himself into the arms of his friend.

They stood thus for some minutes, immovable, and their

tears flowed. The three brothers and the young man remained motionless during this long and silent embrace.

"It is you!" at length murmured Rochette. "You,—you here! Something assured me—and yet how could I have believed it?—that I should not die without having embraced you? Thanks,—thanks."

"My son,—my poor son!" exclaimed Rabaut. "I see you here,—in prison,—death is perhaps at hand. Yes, something assured me also that I should see you once more in this world. And I,—freer than you, could at least ask to see you,—could come to you. And so here I am. I know that you do not need my presence in order to remain faithful. But I—I had need of you, in order to teach a lesson of fidelity unto death. —To teach him—"

And disengaging himself from the embrace of the prisoner, he approached the young man, who remained near the door, his eyes filled with tears.

"My son," he said to him, "you wished to accompany me hither. You wished to see him. There he stands. You are about to enter upon that career which he is soon to quit as a martyr. He is but five or six years older than you, yet he was one of our best laborers. You arrive as he leaves us. May his blood, my son, be unto you a baptism of courage and faith."

The young man attempted to throw himself upon his knees before Rochette, but the latter prevented him. He embraced the son as he had embraced the father.

"How you are grown, Saint-Etienne!" he exclaimed. "Grown physically, and also—for we have very often heard of you—in faith and in knowledge. You were but a child when I last saw you,—now you are a man. Yes, there are no vacancies in the army of Jesus Christ. One falls, another fills

his place. Your father was right. But he proposed me for your model,—he, he who has ever been mine! What have I done, that he has not done again and again? I am about to die. Well, that is not the greatest sacrifice. It is far easier to die once, than to be exposed daily, hourly, for twenty long years, to every danger. If God mercifully support me to the end, I shall go forth far more calmly to my execution, than I have often gone upon my various journeys or escapes."

Thus spoke Rochette, and with that perfect composure which is the highest degree of true courage. It was with perfect simplicity and sincerity that he represented martyrdom as an easy thing, and one which met with almost too great a reward.

"But enough of myself," he resumed. "Am I the only one present, who is exposed to death? Here, my dear brother, are the three friends who may follow, or perhaps even precede me on the scaffold. Martyrs for our faith, they will be at the same time the victims of a mistake, or perhaps of a falsehood. I shall be condemned as a minister; which is true; they are to be condemned as rebels, and they never were rebels."

LXIII.

SONGS OF PRAISE.

Rabaut approached the three brothers. He addressed to them those words which none knew how to apply as he did.

"Courage," he said, "courage! God has not summoned you to this trial without holding in reserve for you, in the riches of his mercy, all the strength of which you will have need. Ask it of him, my brethren, and he will give it you. But no,—I see that you have already asked and received it."

And then he began to tell them what he had endeavored to do for them. He did not conceal his fears; he left them no illusions in regard to the unlikelihood of success. But as he destroyed their hopes of life, he but detached their souls from the earth, and revived their longing for the joys of heaven. From time to time they united in prayer. The whole interview was a song of praise to that God for whom they were to die.

"Why should we not sing one of our psalms?" said Rochette. "Let us sing, my friends. This prison is our temple."

"Yes," Rabaut replied; "after the vault of heaven, there is no other more glorious than a prison vault, when the prisoner is there for his faith. Let us sing. But do you venture? You will certainly be heard."

"They are accustomed to it."

"And they allow it?"

"Unless they gag us, they cannot help it."

"Let us sing!"

And, his voice trembling with emotion, he commenced the one hundred and sixteenth psalm:

> "I love the Lord; he heard my plaintive cries,
> And bent in pity for my every groan;
> Long as I live, when doubts and troubles rise,
> Trusting, I'll hasten to his heavenly throne."

And at the same moment every voice joined his, and their hearts were with their voices, and from the depths of their souls they blessed God for a greater deliverance, instead of imploring for their earthly freedom. Why should they supplicate for deliverance from death, when God had already deprived death of its sting, and the grave of its victory?

"My heart was faint, and peace had fled my soul,
And sighing I approached the awful tomb.
. . . . . .
The Lord beheld me weak and sore distressed;
He, in his mercy, banished all my fears,
Then, O my soul, return to God thy rest."

But they suddenly paused. While they yet sang, they had fancied they heard an echo. Now, there was no mistake,—the sounds continued. The melody reached them, weak and confused, but still recognizable, and though the high vault of their prison no longer sent back their own words to them, they heard these same words coming from the apartment beneath.

The Calas were imprisoned below them. They had heard and replied to the chant. And thus all these souls, in spite of bars and vaulted cells, had united in one song of praise to God.

LXIV.

ANOTHER VISITOR.

In the meantime the day was drawing to its close. The winter sun shed its last pale rays through the grated windows.

"My friends," Rabaut at length said, "we must separate. I hope that I shall see you again. I was told that I might return; and yet—"

His voice trembled; the rising tears blinded him.

"Gentlemen," said the gaoler, entering once more, "another visitor. Not perhaps a very welcome one, but—"

"Father Bourges, I am sure," exclaimed Jean.

"No,—it is not he. Some one who comes at his request."

"It is all the same, then. A priest?"

"Yes, a priest."

"Let him come in. By the way," he added, laughing,—for

the poor boy easily recovered his careless gayety,—"he does not need our permission."

"The crows scent their prey," said the elder.

"They will find us still vigorous. The other was beaten—he sends fresh troops."

"Hush!"

The priest entered. He was a rather tall and slender man, with a lofty brow and small eyes, and held his head slightly inclined towards the left. In short, his whole physiognomy was one of those which make as many efforts to destroy the involuntary impression which they leave, as others do to increase this impression. Besides, if the half obscurity had permitted, it might have been easily remarked that its present was not its habitual expression. It would have been felt that he was a man more accustomed to rule than to be humble—to threaten than to be polite.

He was very polite, however, as he approached the prisoners. His hat under his arm, he saluted, with head and hand, in an unimpeachably graceful style.

"A Jesuit," murmured Jean.

"Gentlemen," he began, "do not be surprised—"

Rabaut recognized the man by his voice. It was the Satan of his Judas—the tempter of poor d'Ambly—the man of the red-hot pincers.

"Do not be surprised," said Father Charnay, "if I have somewhat eagerly seized an opportunity of seeing you. My friend, Father Bourges, is alone the guardian of your consciences, and he has no need of me moreover."

This was false. It was the good Father himself who had begged him to come to his aid in regard to these unhappy hardened beings, as he called them. The Jesuit had calculated the honor which might revert to him from their conversion, but

as this was nothing less than likely, he did not wish to appear to undertake it with all its risks and perils.

"Father Bourges," he resumed, "has spoken of you to me, with the tenderest interest. You display—he says—a courage, a perseverence, worthy of a better cause. This is what I wished most particularly to witness, my dear brothers, and—but you are not alone?"

He had just perceived Rabaut and his son. It will be remembered that he did not know him.

"Monsieur Théo, a merchant—one of our friends—and his son"—Rochette hastened to say.

"One of your friends of your own belief, doubtless," said the Jesuit.

"Yes, Monsieur," replied Rabaut.

The anxiety of his friends was great. The surprise of the Jesuit *appeared* sincere, which, however was no reason for believing that he was actually surprised. It was possible that he had been already apprized of Rabaut's presence; perhaps there were officers at his orders, outside of the door, ready to seize the minister.

Rabaut was as usual, the most composed. If he knew that I was here, he thought to himself, then his measures are taken, and it is useless for me to dream of escaping. If he suspects nothing, he cannot recognize, as he does not know me. But I must not appear to avoid him.

And he offered him a chair. Charnay seated himself, but not without a low bow.

"Gentlemen," he said, "may I ask which of you is Monsieur Rochette?"

Rochette bowed.

"You are a good reasoner, Monsieur, I am told," continued the Jesuit.

"Did Father Bourges perceive that?" asked Jean.

"He spoke to me of you, also, Monsieur," resumed Charnay, addressing himself to the young man.

"Of me?"

"Of you. I already recognize the vivacity, the talent, which he described you as possessing."

"I am really quite overwhelmed—"

"Ah! my child, it is nothing in your praise. Cleverness and talent are qualities which have conduced far more to the perdition than to the salvation of souls. Happy the simple."

"Happy Father Bourges, then!"

Charnay smiled, for although he spoke with severity of quickness and cleverness, he was desirous of showing that he possessed more of these qualities than his brother priest. But he immediately resumed his serious tone.

"Yes," he repeated, "happy the simple! Happy those who dispute not! God resisteth the proud, it is written, but he giveth grace to the humble. Fear to struggle against God—"

"By struggling against God, you mean resisting you and your friends, do you not?"

"No! the church, my friend—I mean the church, His well-beloved daughter, of which I, myself, am but the humblest child, and the most unworthy minister."

And he cast down his eyes and bent himself, with his hands crossed upon his breast.

"A great deal of humility," remarked Jean, "at the service of a still greater amount of pride!"

"The church exercises her rights," he replied, a little disconcerted. "There is no pride in claiming the privileges which have been bestowed by God—Infallibility—"

"Monsieur," interrupted Rabaut, "my friends have probably scarcely a week to live. Have you nothing better to offer

them than theological questions, even admitting these to be correct?"

"Let him have his own way," said Rochette. "*Martyr* signifies *witness*. Why should we not bear witness as long as we live, to our faith? If these gentlemen are really desirous that the martyrdom should be complete—"

"Ah! why do you speak of martyrdom?" cried Charnay, apparently with deep feeling. "And we would so willingly give our very heart's blood, if you would but consent to live."

As we have already seen, they always offered to liberate the ministers, upon condition of their abjuring their faith. The same proposition had been made to the three brothers.

"You might as well lead us directly to execution," replied the minister, "as to offer us our lives at a price to which you know we shall never agree. We have frequently told this to Father Bourges, ever since he first visited us; we even added —to speak quite plainly—that the proposal appeared to us a tolerably unprincipled one. It is only cruelty and folly to kill people on account of their belief; but it is far more cruel and revolting than prison and torture, to place them between their consciences and the scaffold—to offer them the most attractive of all earthly possessions—life!—as the reward of a lie—to urge the unhappy wretches to their perdition, in the sight of God, as well as to their dishonor in the eyes of man. I speak here simply of the thing itself, not of the men who urge it. I know that there are many men among you, who believe themselves really charitable in offering us life at the price of an abjuration. But that which excuses them in such a case, is on the other hand a serious fault to be found with your Church. *She* has taught them to look upon salvation as depending upon the external profession of her worship and doctrines; *she*, without distinctly teaching it, by the whole of her laws, forms, and

tendencies, has made general the opinion that the essential matter is to belong to *her*, and that the most unworthy of her children is more secure of salvation, than the most pious heretic in the world. So soon as this is believed, it is no matter how or why people may come to her. Whether their conversion may have been spontaneous and sincere, or whether a timid fear of death may have been its only motive, it is no matter; they are received into grace in the sight of the Church and of God. In this way, the end will always justify the means. Confiscations, fines, persecutions of all sorts, prisons, galleys and tortures, all will be equally excellent as a means of bringing those into the pale of the Church, who are determined to remain outside."

LXV.

JESUITICAL DISTINCTIONS.

"But we must make a distinction," said Charnay.

"Jesuit,—Jesuit," murmured Jean de Lourmade.

"We must make a distinction," repeated Charnay. "The Church has nothing to do with these tortures and scaffolds. The Church has a horror of blood. *Abhorret à sanguine.* Spiritual weapons are the only ones which she can or will employ."

"And so," said Jean, "when we are sent to the galleys—"

"By whose edict are you sent there?"

"When our ministers are executed—"

"Who sentenced them to death?"

"Excellent! So it is a base calumny to attribute to you the horrors of the Inquisition. The Inquisition, even in Spain, has never shed a drop of blood. Oh no! She only passes her victims over to certain royal officers. To be sure she

knows very well that they will be burned; but then she did not put any such word into the sentence. Condemned to death by the Church! What an idea! by the Church! by so tender a mother."

But while he spoke, Jean rose. Irony could not sufficiently express what he felt. His indignation burst forth.

"And you dare," he cried, "you dare to tell us this to our faces! Do you not see that it would be enough of itself to give us a horror and disgust for your Church, even if we were now without such a feeling? What! because the edicts of Louis XIV. were not signed by priests, the Church has no responsibility in the matter! Because the members of the parliament which condemns us are not priests,—it is not the Church which is the cause of our death! Where then did our kings learn this monstrous doctrine which makes them masters of our souls as well as our bodies? Who vaunted to them that unity which you have set up as an idol to worship, and charged them to uphold it, even if they must employ fire and sword? Who have commended and blessed them for all the horrible inventions which they have used against the enemies of that bloody chimera? Who have constantly represented to them that the persecution and oppression of the heretics was the surest means of pleasing God and purchasing pardon for their sins or crimes? From whom are heard cries of indignation throughout all France so soon as the government appears to relax in its severities towards us? And you wash your hands of all those atrocities! And it is sufficient for you to say: 'We make a distinction,' in order to free your consciences from all this blood of martyrs! 'The king!—The edicts! The parliaments!'—you say,—and the king is only the arm, while you, you are the head!"

The Jesuit had endeavored several times to arrest him, but

in vain. Lourmade stood before him; his eye was kindled, and his gesture and glance made the priest cower before him.

What could he have replied? The vehemence of the young man's words and manner could not alter the truth of what he said.

But this singular "distinction" was none the less frequently in the mouths of all those interested in defending the Church and the clergy. We find it long afterwards even in the memorial in which Malesherbes advocated the emancipation of the Protestants. "In 1752," he writes, "the bishops of Languedoc demanded the rigorous execution of the laws of Louis XIV. It could not be as bishops, however, that they made this demand. When they advised these extreme measures, they looked upon themselves as laymen consulted by the king." A great consolation, indeed, for the victims of their bloody counsels! But Malesherbes evidently wrote this merely as a rhetorical precaution, in order not to be forced to speak too severely against the persecution of which he demanded the cessation; yet many asserted, and still assert it, with the most incredible assurance. At the present day weighty books are written whose authors dare to tell the sons of these Protestant martyrs that the Church had nothing to do with the death of their fathers. It is seriously and learnedly attempted to prove that the Inquisition condemned no one to death.

LXVI.

THE PRETENCE OF INFALLIBILITY, AN ABSURDITY.

But as Jean de Lourmade continued with increasing vehemence to demolish this abominable sophism, his eldest brother at length said:

"Enough, Jean. Calm yourself. Do you imagine that

Monsieur needs to be convinced of the truth of this matter? You know Father Charnay, do you not?" he continued, addressing himself to Charnay.

"Father—Charnay!" said the Jesuit, hesitatingly.

"Yes. The Inspector of the missions."

"Well?"

"Well, go and ask him whether it be not he himself who sends us to the galleys, and whether, when he condemns us, he is anything else but the zealous agent of your Church."

Charnay was relieved, for as he had not sent in his name before he entered, he fancied himself equally unknown to all present. He was now far more anxious than Rabaut himself to leave the prison.

"My friends," he said, "I confess that I did not anticipate such an attack. I came here out of pure charity. I wished to talk with you,—in the name of the Church, it is true,—but her rights do not depend upon the greater or less amount of severity which men may employ in asserting them. We are poor sinners,—but that does not alter the fact in regard to the supremacy of the Church,—the pillar of the truth,—as Saint Paul has said,—the inheritor of the promises,—the tender mother of us all,—even of you who reject her. What! do you think that God would have sent his Son to bring the truth into the world, only to leave this treasure at the mercy of the human imagination! Do you think God would abandon his own work? But reflect, my dear friends. Would you act thus yourselves? Would you make laws, and appoint no magistrates? And can there be an infallible book, and yet no one to interpret it infallibly? It might just as well not be infallible; or rather, it might just as well not have been given us."

"Monsieur," said Rabaut, "I suppose you believe in the holiness of God."

"What a question!"

"You believe that God created man?"

"Most undoubtedly."

"After his own image?"

"After his own image. Those are the words of the Bible."

"Well, let us see. It is impossible, you say, that in giving us a law, God should not have taken measures to preserve it pure from all alteration. Very good; but listen now to my reasoning. God is holy; God created man *after his own image*. He was accordingly created pure and holy. Who will assert that it was not likely that God would take measures to preserve him pure, holy, and untainted? My argument is as good as yours. It has but one defect, namely, that the conclusion is positively contrary to facts; although the work of a holy God, man is unholy."

"But," said Charnay, "that is easily explained. Man is free. Unless he had been made a mere machine—"

"Take care," said Rabaut. "I did not say that it was inexplicable; I only said that *à priori* we would not have imagined a holy God permitting evil. Since, then, he *has* permitted it, you cannot assume as certain, that having given us a revelation, he has also taken measures to render error impossible."

"And, accordingly," said the Jesuit, "we have never pretended to assert that the argument *à priori* was sufficient. The Church has received assurances, thanks be to God."

"The *Church*, yes,—but what Church? Do not play with the word, I beg. You know as well as we do, that when the apostles spoke of the *Church*, they meant all Christians."

"Because at that time all Christians formed in reality but one Church."

"And now there are several, it is true; and yours alone,

you say, has inherited these assurances of God's presence. But who affirms this? The Church herself. Accordingly, from the very beginning, we are reasoning in a circle. I am infallible. Why? Because God has declared me so. Where? In the Scriptures. But we do not find this declaration there. No matter, it is there. And who will guarantee this? I will. This, Monsieur, is the sum of all your reasonings upon the subject. I am infallible, because I affirm it. I affirm it, because I am infallible. In vain you repeat this. There must be some demonstration previous to yours, independent of the authority to be established. Where will you go to look for this?"

"That," said Charnay, "is not a question which I would have expected from a Protestant. You ask where I go to look for my first proofs? Why, to the same book in which you look for yours."

"With us," replied the minister, "it is quite another thing. The more we recur to the Bible, the more faithful we are to our principles; but every appeal you make to its authority, is abandoning yours."

"Have we not always regarded it as the first and surest source of our faith?"

"As the first,—but not as the surest. With you, it is not the Bible which teaches the true faith; it is the Bible interpreted by the Church. What does a direct appeal to Scripture signify on your part? Is it not an invitation to examine the Scripture,—and is not *that* Protestantism? Is it necessary then, in order to become a Catholic, to begin by being a Protestant? No, no! Authority asserts itself; it does not seek proofs. So soon as it does this, it is no longer authority.

"I even go farther," continued Rabaut. "I maintain that the very texts upon which your Church founds her pretensions

to infallibility, cannot really count for anything. The Scripture abounds in declarations quite as explicit, which you would never dream of claiming as positive promises. '*All* that ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he shall give unto you.' 'God will give his Spirit to *all* those who shall ask him.' This is very positive, more so than all that has been quoted in favor of your Church. According to these declarations, the Quaker is quite as well justified in believing himself inspired by the Holy Ghost, as your Church is when she asserts that other declarations prove her to be infallible. So that this is a question which you cannot decide affirmatively upon Scripture authority in favor of any one. Even if I could not find a word in reply to all that you might bring forward to prove that the Church *ought* to be infallible, it would still remain to be examined whether it ever has been so, and we should be forced to recommence this examination in regard to every new doctrine or fraction of a doctrine.

"You take the position from the first, that God wills unity. Accordingly, if you labor with this object in view, no matter what means you may use, you call yourselves fellow-laborers with God. He wills unity! How do you know? Open your eyes, and you will be inclined to think that he does not wish it,—at least as understood by *your* Church. What! do you think he intended and willed that sort of unity, and yet at the end of eighteen hundred years none but your Church has ever discovered it! You think it is necessary to salvation, and yet he has left so many paths open through which we may quit such an unity! The best proof in my eyes that he does not wish it, that salvation is not dependent upon it, is that it does not exist.

"But have you, can you have the right to force any one to work out his salvation by one way rather than another? You

will answer that there are not two ways, and that if you wish to force us to use yours, it is because there is no other. Be it so; but you confound two things which have in reality no connection. The right of instruction is not the right of coercion. The apostles undoubtedly possessed the former, but when did they arrogate to themselves the latter? Even in the words which you quote to establish the infallibility of your Church, where is any mention of any constraint to be used against those who do not hear her voice? 'Force them to come in,' says the scripture; but it is evident that at a period when the Church herself was undergoing persecution, these words only signified the untiring, zealous efforts to be made, and the effects of persuasion.

"I repeat, accordingly: suppose your infallibility to be proved, it does not bring with it the right of coercion. God employs no constraint, although he might do so simply by an influence upon the mind, without violence. Why not? We do not know, but the fact is none the less evident. He might, by one word, unite us, yet he leaves us separated. Is it, then, to be supposed that he puts this power, which he himself does not use, into *your* hands, when you cannot exercise it save by torturing your fellow men, and by sullying Christianity with the most odious barbarities?

"But, perhaps you will say that these barbarities prove nothing one way or the other, that the authority of the Church is independent of the measures, good or bad, taken to maintain it. I reply that this authority, without severity, is but an idle word. What is it, I may ask, in those countries where secular authority is not at its command? What could you do against us in France, without the aid given you by government? What could you do against infidelity, even with this aid? What heretic did you ever convert, what infidel did you ever

bring to silence, by commanding him in the name of the Church, but without threats or severity, to keep silence and to believe? Where have you ever seen a priest—unless he had those at his elbow to force obedience—better heeded and obeyed than our pastors? Persecution, Monsieur, persecution is a necessary, an indispensable ingredient of the Romish system. Your authority, of itself, exists only for those who are willing to submit to it, but then it is liberty. There is no medium; liberty or persecution. Do not talk, then, about authority or infallibility; they are either vain words, or atrocious realities. If there is nothing behind them, they are laughable; if there is, it can only be a scaffold!"

LXVII.

THE JESUIT AND THE HUGUENOT.

But Rabaut had forgotten himself. The attendant had entered with a light, and Charnay could now observe his last antagonist. The fluency of his speech, and the ease of his gestures, together with the attention of the others, even of Rochette, who was silent since Rabaut had been speaking, and a certain air which betrays a man accustomed to speaking, had led the Jesuit to think that Monsieur Théo, the merchant, might be something besides a merchant. Accordingly, for the last few minutes, he had scarcely been listening. It was evident that he was doing something besides thinking what answer he should make, or what error he should correct.

Jean de Lourmade had been the first to perceive the workings of his mind. He had followed them upon the Jesuit's countenance, and during the latter part of Rabaut's remarks, he observed what appeared to him an effort to conceal a sud-

den light which had flashed upon him. The mischief was done. Charnay perceived that the speaker was a minister. Perhaps he had even guessed the name.

He had done so; and Rabaut himself saw that he had, after it was too late. His courage, however, made him more skillful than did dissimulation the Jesuit, and he had completely concealed his anxiety; but the almost supernatural effort had finally exhausted him. His tongue, until then, more fluent than ever, seemed suddenly paralyzed. Behind his enemy he seemed suddenly to perceive the scaffold which he had just been describing as hidden behind all the decrees of the Romish Church. He saw himself and his son prisoners; he saw two more lives to be lost, for there was no mercy to be hoped from a Charnay, and it was more than doubtful whether the attorney-general—who had already compromised himself by permitting them to enter the prison—would farther endanger himself by permitting them to escape. Besides, if the affair once became noised abroad, it was probable that the judges themselves would no longer have it in their power to do so.

And so they had at length recognized each other. They gazed at one another motionless, and both equally fascinated. Charnay dared not spring upon his prey. Rabaut held his breath, as if the slightest movement must have entangled him in the net which he already felt thrown over him. Petrified with terror, the others awaited the issue of this mute struggle.

At length, Charnay half rose, and his eye flashing, his brow knit, his arms extended towards the minister, he exclaimed—

"Rabaut!"

No one stirred.

But Rabaut, in his turn, raised his hand, and pointing his finger at the Jesuit, said—

"Charnay!"

"Charnay!" exclaimed the others.

But this explosion of horror restored to him all his usual audacity. He rose impetuously.

"Yes!" he cried; "yes—I am Charnay! You know me at length. You shall know me still better. I am Charnay,—heretics! Yes, thou hast well guessed.—And I, also.—It is my turn now, preacher! Thou hast tricked me until now,—at Aigues-Mortes,—at Pont-de-Montvert,—but thou shalt not trick me at Toulouse.—Help,—gaoler,—help!"

And he sprang towards the door.

But Jean de Lourmade had foreseen this. Armed with one of the knives which had been left upon the table, he bounded forward and seized the Jesuit's arm.

"Not a word,—not a cry," he said. "Perhaps you have already been heard. If the gaolor comes, make some excuse. Say—anything you like. I only say this to you,—listen. If Monsieur Rabaut is taken,—you are a dead man."

"Let me go," exclaimed Charnay. "I wish to go out."

"You shall not go out."

"You say that I shall not go out!"

"Yes,—not until he has gone out and is in safety."

"I shall not say anything."

"Really?"

"I swear it."

"Indeed? Which of the councils is it which decrees that oaths sworn to heretics need not be kept? That of Constance, I think."

"Have done. What do you require of me?"

"I am going to ring. The gaoler will open the door. You will be sitting with us—there—at the other end of the room. Monsieur Rabaut and his son will leave the room. You will

silently witness their departure. Then you may go—half an hour afterwards—that is. Come, Monsieur."

Charnay allowed himself to be led back, pale with rage, to the seat which he had just left.

Jean seized the bell-rope. "One moment," said Rabaut.

"No, no," said the prisoner. "Why delay?"

"Why? Because I shall never return, my poor boy—"

And his voice faltered, for it was too evident that after this occurrence, he must not venture again to enter the prison.

"Adieu, then," he resumed; "adieu, my friends; adieu, Rochette. You shall not say to me, as our Master said to his disciples, 'If ye loved me, ye would rejoice that I go to my Father.' No, my son, no. I love you so well that I am able to rejoice that you are going to our Father. We shall weep to lose you, but we shall envy your lot. Adieu, you also, adieu. These walls, these barred doors shall not prevent my being with you still in this world, any more than the tomb shall prevent my being with you by faith in that world to which you now precede me. Once more, dear friends, God be with you."

Jean rang the bell at a signal from him, and then returned to his station beside the priest.

"They are coming," he said to him in a low voice. "Take care. One word, one gesture, one glance, and you are—"

He showed him the knife. Charnay did not move. One arm hung down beside him, and the other rested upon the table; his head was bent, and his hands tightly clenched.

The grating of the bolt was heard. The door opened.

"Show out these gentlemen," said Jean de Lourmade.

And after another farewell, Rabaut slowly went out with his son.

LXVIII.

SAVED!

The priest did not stir.

Doors were heard to open and shut. The prisoners were all standing, their eyes fixed upon the door, and their hearing strained to its utmost. One more door opened, then was heavily closed. They knew from the sound that it was the one leading to the street.

"Saved!" cried Jean.

The priest did not stir.

"Saved!" repeated the young man, throwing his arms around the neck of his elder brother. And with a trembling but still powerful and joyful voice, he commenced the old Huguenot *Te Deum:*

> "We praise thee mighty God, we worship thee, O Lord;
> A joyful hymn we sing, unto thy name adored;
> By all thy creatures raised, it through the earth shall ring
> In honor of our God, our Father, and our King."

Scarcely had they sung the first line, when the voices from below took up the strain, and the pious echo followed from line to line, from word to word. At the end of the verse they stopped,—and the second was continued like a distant murmur from the prison beneath them. They joined their voices:

> "Thrice holy is our God, the universe shall shout,
> The mighty Lord of hosts—"

A cry of horror arrested them. One of them, turning towards the priest, had perceived his face covered with blood.

His eyes were closed, and blood trickled from his nose and mouth; his clothes also were covered with it.

His impotent rage had brought on apoplexy. The inquisitor of Languedoc had appeared in the presence of his Maker sooner than those in whose death he was prepared to rejoice.

LXIX.

THE CALAS FAMILY.—EXAGGERATED STYLE OF WRITING IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

Let us go down for a time into the cell from which the Calas had raised their voices in order to join the hymn of the other prisoners.

Like the latter, they had for some time past been allowed to associate more freely. At first they had been imprisoned separately, but after numerous examinations, the judges perceived that nothing more was to be drawn from them, and they were allowed to be together, although only in the presence of a gaoler.

On this day for the first time,—it was, as may be remembered, the first of January, 1762,—they had been left alone. They were once more united at table, as upon the fatal evening of the thirteenth of October. The father, the mother, the son and his friend Lavaysse, and the two daughters Rose and Anne, all were there save him whose insanity had plunged them all into this abyss.

And accordingly their first thought had been for him.

"He was there," said the father, as he seated himself; "there, before me. I see him still. He never raised his eyes; he seemed insensible to all that passed around him. Twice I asked him why he ate nothing. That morning I had

almost given him my malediction. He had deserved it,—unhappy boy! but still, the recollection of it was a weight upon my heart. I was glad of an opportunity of showing some interest in him. 'Why do you eat nothing?' I asked. He made no reply,—but went away—"

"Enough, enough," said the mother.

"He went away. 'Where are you going?' I asked. But he had already gone out of the door which he was never more to enter."

"Father," said Pierre Calas,—for he saw that these sad recollections, which the old man was never weary of bringing forward, made his mother suffer exceedingly,—"father, when shall we have Monsieur Rabaut's pamphlet?"

"In a few days, I think. Monsieur de la Salle, it seems, persists in saying that he ought not to publish it."

"He is wrong."

"Perhaps he is right."

"What judges! To whom we fear to prove too plainly that they are mistaken!"

"Such, however, my poor boy, are our judges. We must take them as they are. And you, Lavaysse, what do you think of it?"

"I think that if the parliament has not been convinced by the memorials of Monsieur Sudre and of my father, nothing will convince them."

"Nothing; you are right," said Pierre Calas. "These memorials are masterpieces. We may almost be proud of having inspired them."

This feeling—truth obliges us to say—was certainly rather inspired by the gratitude than the taste of the prisoners. The peculiar style and phraseology of the age spoiled everything. Truth seemed to take pleasure in dressing itself in the apparel

of falsehood. All the defenders of the family Calas had been obliged to sacrifice to this demand for high-sounding phrases, and pompous expressions of feeling. One only, Rabaut, was an exception to this. His *Calumny Confounded*, which Gebelin has handed down to us in his *Toulousaines*, is a masterpiece of calm reasoning and simply-expressed indignation.

The advocate Sudre, on the contrary, had given himself up, heart and soul, to all the pomposities of the day. If it were not for the melancholy subject, one could laugh at his ever recurring apostrophes to the accused, to the judges, to humanity, to truth, to nature,—in short, to all the abstract deities of an age almost without a God. Beside very well expressed arguments, occur phrases which would disgrace a schoolboy. "In defending you," he says to the Calas, "I have not intended to serve you alone, but all mankind. There is not one of the human race who must not be distressed to perceive that the nature in which he shares, should be recognized as capable of so strange a ferocity." What did he mean? What he says is not merely forced, but false. Even if the Calas should be acquitted, the murder of a son by his father is unhappily not an unheard-of thing, and our *nature* has many times proved itself capable of it. "Elsewhere," he says, "I have listened to justice and to sagacity. Their wisdom has enlightened me. The nobleness of their thoughts has elevated mine." And all this to say that he had studied the materials of the case without prejudice! But nothing, in this style, can equal part of his second memorial, for Monsieur Sudre wrote two. He says: "While I was penning this second pamphlet, an unknown hand was likewise occupied in defending these unhappy beings. Generous unknown! With what joy I beheld myself eclipsed by him! *Then there still exist men!* From this moment *the earth seems more beautiful to me!*" Upon which the author of

the *Toulousaines*, after having quoted this passage, exclaims, addressing himself to the writer, "You it is who here transport me with admiration!" Even Court, the savant, praises such declamation! and his *Toulousaines*, it must be confessed, but too frequently merit the same tasteless admiration which he professes for the advocate of Toulouse.

Even the father and brother of Lavaysse, both lawyers, adopted in their memorials the same style. Towards the middle of his, the father—whether his courage really failed him, or whether he thought it would have a fine effect to be a little theatrical—drops the pen from his hand. "What do I hear?" he cries. "Just heaven! They are judging my son! I have not the power to go on—I fall. Arm thyself with courage, my dear son; complete the defence of thy unfortunate brother!" "I obey my father's command," says the son, continuing the memorial. "How much I lament, my dear brother, that thou must behold thy defence in such feeble hands! Will my zeal supply my want of talent?" And Gebelin cries, "How touching is this whole scene! How affecting! We cannot refuse our tears to such earnest and beautiful sentiments."

It would be easy to fancy one's self reading a scene from the *Natural Son* of Diderot. Sentiment was degraded even in its purest sources. The great formers of the public opinion of the day had so extravagantly praised this style,* that it was scarcely admissible to write in any other.

* "None but Diderot could undertake such a thing. Diderot opens a new career to genius. Diderot has but to continue writing in this style, to become the absolute master of the drama," etc., etc.—(Grimm on the *Natural Son;* March, 1757.

And yet Grimm had a great deal of good taste; but then Diderot was the person to be praised!

LXX.

VINDICATIONS OF THE CALAS FAMILY.

Happily, the arguments in the case were too powerful to bend much beneath the weight of this heavy pathos.

In his first memorial, Sudre attacked the legal nullities with which the process was encumbered, which belonged partly to the first report of the case, and the reports of the lawyers; also to the monitory, and consequently to all the depositions received in virtue of this act,—in short, to all the proceedings connected with the beginning of the examination. The advocate proves that the Calas could not be legally condemned by such a proceeding, even if they were evidently guilty.

Then passing on to the facts themselves, he proposes and answers all the questions connected with them.

Is it true that Mark-Antony Calas had renounced the Protestant religion, and that he was to have abjured the next day, or soon afterwards? The author shows that there are neither proofs nor indications of this.

Of what nature were the threats which Calas had been heard to use towards his son? The author proves beyond contradiction that not a word had passed save in relation to the usual irregularities of the latter.

Notwithstanding the length of the proceedings, and the minute care which appeared to have been taken, had all the facts which might enlighten the minds of the judges really been studied attentively? The author enumerates nine facts which had not been thoroughly examined, and which, so long as they had not been contradicted nor explained, forbade the supposition that the Calas family were guilty.

The second and shorter memorial was designed to explain and elucidate the principal points in the first. The author shows at the close, the perilous nature of that blind jurisprudence which allows itself to be led by the passions of the multitude, and which puts the sword of justice into the hands of the first comer.

There were likewise excellent things in the anonymous publication, which Monsieur Sudre commended in rather too emphatic a style. Public rumor attributes it to Monsieur de la Salle. It was not so much a formal memorial as a series of observations in favor of the Calas. The author added several other illegalities to those which had already been pointed out. Then he applied himself to destroying, by means of these discrepancies, the testimony collected against the accused. He pointed out—which was not difficult—the great contradictions of the witnesses, and how far they were from being, all together, worth one well-informed eye-witness.

The memorial of Lavaysse's relatives added little to the preceding. It was more especially in favor of the young man whom a melancholy accident had led to the house of the Calas, on the thirteenth of October. It was there proved that even if they were guilty, Lavaysse could neither have known of the crime, nor aided in its commission.

Lavaysse himself had published a few pages containing an account of the occurrence. He had added to it the attestations sent him by many respectable persons, both in regard to the morality of the character he bore, and to the various circumstances of his journey to Toulouse. He had evidence to prove what he had at first asserted, namely, that when the Calas detained him to sup with them, he was on his way to engage horses to take him immediately to his father at Caraman.

A sixth memorial was by Louis Calas, the son who had be-

come a Catholic. He declared that he had never been annoyed by his family on the subject of his change of religion, and that he had never seen any disposition whatever in his brother Mark-Antony, to imitate him.

These, together with Rabaut's pamphlet, were all the publications written in defence of the accused. These were the arguments and facts to which the tribunal was condemned to close its eyes, if it would permit the hatred of an erring multitude to gain its object.

LXXI.

PROSELYTING ATTEMPTS.

To return to the accused.

The meal was passed in calculating sadly for the hundredth time the probabilities of condemnation or acquittal. We must not be astonished if these preoccupied the Calas more than they did the prisoners in the cell above them. A man like Rochette, who had for a long time been accustomed to anticipate the possible sacrifice of his life, might throw aside these sombre ideas, without a very violent effort; but it is very difficult for a whole family to be courageous. Death, at which you would smile if alone, holds you fast, and drags you down by means of all these ties—husband, wife, mother, father, child. The three Greniers were brothers, but they had all the ardor of youth and the indifference of French gentlemen, and besides, all accused together, they had at least the assurance of being condemned or acquitted together. The Calas had been separately tried, and although—admitting the crime—it was absurd to suppose that the father had committed it alone, it was evidently the father whom they were particularly anxious to con-

demn. Consequently, each one of the family, beside his own personal fears, was obliged to tremble for Calas the father. It was injustice upon injustice. All were innocent, yet a special pity must be felt for this old man, as innocent as the rest, but whose destruction was pitilesssly resolved upon.

We may add that they had not been spared the miserable persecutions which had been so indignantly repulsed by the four other prisoners. But these, which for the latter were only an annoyance, and, as it were, a tiresome amusement, were a daily and hourly agony for the unhappy family. The proselytes hoped to find a certain and easy prey in the two young girls. Nothing was neglected which might alienate them from their parents, neither promises, insinuations nor threats; and although they had hitherto remained immovable, attacks of this kind had so often succeeded, that no parent could help trembling, lest his children also should become victims.

Father Bourges had particularly distinguished himself in this melancholy crusade. To be sure he appeared actuated by real charity—perhaps, indeed, we are wrong in saying *appeared*—for nothing warrants us in believing that he was not sincere. But he was one of those who venture to go as far in the name of charity, as others in that of fanaticism. These pertinacious attempts at conversion are sometimes all the more wearying because they are sincere, since, in repelling them, one cannot use the strength which would be given by indignation.

He had, moreover, discovered that the Calas, both father and son, were men quite capable of meeting him upon his own grounds, and he perceived besides, that the young girls communicated to them his conversations with themselves. He had accordingly been obliged to use better arguments than those which the priests generally use to women, consisting of vague sentimentalities, arrogant assertions and facts *arranged* for the

purpose, not to say falsified. In spite of this, he had more than once allowed himself to use a little exaggeration, still to employ this form of expression, rather than another which would perhaps be more correct.

One day, for instance, he gave them a magnificent description of the papal succession. According to him, there had from Saint Peter to Clement XIII. been no hiatus, no schism, and the young girls admired this long and majestic chain. But the next day he was asked what he did with the anti-popes, the twenty-four schisms—of which these were five in a single century*—the uncertainty which hangs around the succession at its commencement, etc., all of them things which the Romanists attempt to explain after a fashion, but which might at least induce them to spare us the magnificent descriptions by which they dazzle the unwary and simple.

Another day in explaining the constitution of the Church, he had taken care to say nothing about the transformations which it has undergone. After having heard his explanation, there was no reason not to believe that the cardinals dated from the time of Saint Peter; and so the young girls, without going any further, seemed ready to admit that the organization of the Roman Church went back as far as the time of the early Christians. Their brother then asked him what he had to say of the period when the bishop of Rome was nominated by the faithful of the diocese,—when he had nothing to do with the nomination of other bishops, and when the cardinals were nothing more than curés of the principal parishes of the city, etc., etc.; all of them things which the successors of Father Bourges would willingly dismiss from their recollections.

Of the sacraments too, the *seven* sacraments, whose sacred number had been so audaciously cut short by the Reformation,

* The eleventh.

he frequently spoke in his most magnificent style. He was then asked if he forgot that this number was only definitely settled in 1546, and that too after many debates.

At other times he endeavored by means of Scripture itself, to lead the young girls to approve of ideas which they knew to be combatted by Scripture.

"Bishops!" he would say; "how can it be possible that there should be no bishops? Your Bible itself speaks of them." And he pointed this word out to them in fact, in their Protestant versions. But this time the young girls had no need to appeal to others. They showed him that this word, in the New Testament, was used indiscriminately with that of priest or pastor. Pierre Calas also inquired whether he was not aware that the same confusion of terms is to be found in Clemens Romanus, of whom also they make a successor of Saint Peter.

"'If he neglect to hear the Church,'" he said to them one day, "'let him be unto thee as an heathen man.' It is not I, but Jesus Christ, who says this," he added. "Yes," they replied, "but have you forgotten what goes before? It is simply in case of a quarrel between two brethren; and the Church, in this passage, signifies only those of the faithful whom they are told to choose as arbitrators, rather than to have recourse to the tribunals." What reply could he make? And what reply could those make,—for the passage is one of those most depended upon,—who still dare to alter the meaning which it evidently had in the mouth of Jesus Christ?

On these Scripture grounds, with which they were familiar, the young girls arrested him oftener by appeals to his conscience and his good sense than by detailed objections. If he succeeded, by laboriously putting together various passages, in giving them a shadowy demonstration of Purgatory,—they

would say; "You cannot seriously believe that a doctrine of such importance, so closely connected with many points treated of by the apostles, would not once have been directly taught in their writings." If he attempted to establish from Scripture, Confession, the Mass, and the worship of the Saints, they replied in the same manner. He could not seriously believe, they said, that such cardinal points should have been so imperceptibly indicated in such a number of pages, addressed to so many Churches.

LXXII.

ADORATION OF THE VIRGIN.

But there was one point in regard to which he found the young girls more docile.

The worship of the Virgin has always been looked upon by the priests as one of their most infallible instruments of persuasion and influence. This accounts for the enormous developments which it has received; for its very existence, indeed, since there is no article which an enlightened Catholic, if he examines a little into the matter, would be more immediately obliged to condemn.

But it is likewise one of the articles of faith, in regard to which even the most enlightened allow themselves to be drawn away, without caring to reason upon it. "What harm does it do?" they seem to ask those who oppose it. "Faith, charity, and many religious and poetical emotions are beautifully combined in it. We make no great use of it ourselves, but it is the religion of our wives and daughters. Why should you wish to deprive them of it?"

And in fact it seems to be peculiarly the religion for women.

Why? Christianity offers to them all the emotions which their nature more especially requires, and most assuredly no women ever prayed for these in vain; but Rome prefers to offer them herself ideas and a worship of her own, whose influence must necessarily be peculiarly for her profit.

And yet, a century ago, she was very far from having said and done upon this subject all that she has since said and done. The prevailing infidelity was of great service to Catholicism, in forcing it to remain, at least externally, as reasonable as it was possible for it to be. Books like those which abound at the present day, would have made believers and unbelievers equally indignant. The Virgin, officially much honored, retained in the eyes of educated people a decidedly subordinate place. She performed no miracles, and appeared to no one; she contented herself with being, in virtue of the vow of Louis XIII., the patroness of France, but without exacting that France should pay her the honors offered her by Spain and Italy. No one would have dared to assert, as did Monsieur de Bonald in 1844, that the religion of Christ and the adoration of the Virgin were "two sisters;" no one would have dared to affirm, as he did, that "these two sisters came down from the holy mountain *together* to conquer the souls of mankind," still less, that "in every place where the emblem of salvation is raised, is also displayed the standard of Mary." The Protestants would not have been the only persons to exclaim at the falsehood; the Jansenists would have demanded whether the clergy wished to put new arms into the hands of the heretics, and new sarcasms into the mouths of the infidels.

Accordingly, Father Bourges had cunningly withdrawn this question from Scripture grounds, upon which he knew very well that the young girls would soon conquer him; it was even while acknowledging it to be untenable on these grounds, that

he first began to insinuate it into their hearts. "The adoration of the Virgin is not commanded by Scripture; but is it to be supposed that Scripture pretends to fix the precise limit of what is pleasing to God in all matters? Can the Protestants themselves give exact Scripture authority for everything which they do in their churches with the conviction that it is right? The object of all is to please God and to work out our salvation. Where are we told that if we are inclined to do this in a way indicated by our own hearts, we must avoid this way for the sole reason that it has not been formally commanded by God? To please God,—and how can we do this better than by paying honors to her who was called by an angel, at his command, '*blessed among women?*' To work out our salvation;—to piety and love is salvation promised. Why, then, why reject anything which may increase piety, nourish love, and fill the heart with holy emotions, of which God will remain the source and the object?"

Thus reasoned the old Dominican, and he had almost succeeded by dint of constant repetition. The young girls began to wonder whether it would not be possible to honor the Virgin rather more than their parents did,—although they did not wish this honor to be at all exaggerated. Their parents, to be sure, always spoke of her with the greatest respect, as the Scripture does;—but they showed no enthusiasm, no devoted love for her. Was not this very dry, very cold? Why should they not love Jesus Christ in his mother, just as they loved God in Jesus Christ?

This question preoccupied them more and more. The priest observed that they did not talk of it to their parents. They had accordingly gone so far as to fear being undeceived! He grew bolder. Gradually, and as if yielding to the demands of their imagination and hearts, he began to converse

with them in regard to everything which he taught his devotees upon this subject. In the meantime he allowed everything else to rest; persuaded that this altar once firmly set up in their hearts, the mass and all that accompanies it would not be long in following.

LXXIII.

A PRIEST DISCOMFITED.

But his very cunning was about to destroy his plans.

"Well," said Calas one day to his daughters, "you have not had much to say lately about Father Bourges. Yet he cannot have been all this time without visiting you."

"We have not seen him very often," they replied.

"But you have seen him, then. What did he talk to you about, that you should have told me nothing of it?"

"He has avoided everything that could—pain us."

"Very good; go on."

"We have only talked about—about piety."

"Really? It has always seemed to me that was a subject in regard to which he did not understand a great deal. Indeed there appeared to me to be a greater difference between his piety and ours, than between his belief and ours. Forms, repetitions, penances,—and the saints,—and the Virgin—"

He observed them blush, and understood all.

He contained himself, however. It will be better, he thought, to have the explanation in the presence of the priest himself.

Accordingly the next day he said to Father Bourges:

"I did not know, Monsieur, that in your Church there were two religions."

"Two—two religions?" cried the priest.

"Certainly. That which you preach to my son and myself is certainly not the same which—"

"Oh! father!" continued the young girls.

"Silence," he continued. "Monsieur will have the kindness to explain, I hope."

"Meat for strong men, and milk for babes," said Father Bourges, sententiously.

"Then let us at least taste this milk, in order that we may see if it is pure."

"Ask your daughters how they have been pleased with it."

"They thought it very sweet, I do not doubt. There are poisons, Monsieur, which are very sweet."

"Poison! The adoration of the Virgin!"

"Ah! ha! so it was the adoration of the Virgin?"

"Did you not know it?"

"My daughters did not tell me about it. They have begun their new religion," he added, looking at them fixedly, "by a concealment from their parents,—the first they ever practised."

But he had scarcely spoken these words, before Rose and Anne, bursting into tears, threw themselves into his arms. One look from their father had obliterated all traces of the priest's arguments.

"Monsieur," he said, "I am tired, very tired of controversy. I have for some days declared my intentions of hearing all your representations without replying to them. But you have now sowed error; I must remove it. You have employed illicit manœuvres; I must show my daughters whither you were leading them."

"What do you mean by talking of manœuvres?" said the priest. "Ask them whether—"

"Whether they perceived any? I do not suppose they did. It is for that very reason that I wish to open their eyes. Can you deny that in talking to them of the Virgin you were preparing the way for all that follows?"

"I have showed plainly enough from the beginning, that I wished to have you all become Catholics?"

"Yes; but you allowed these children to believe that you no longer thought of it, and that you would not take them any farther than they wished to go. Is it not so, my daughters?"

They cast down their eyes.

"Let us say nothing of the honesty of the proceeding," resumed Calas. "We are well enough aware that your Church is not accustomed to take that into consideration when she is employed in making converts. But it is not only in respect to us that the Virgin is your auxiliary. There are countries where you reign through her alone; where the whole of Christianity is comprised in her worship."

"An abuse," interrupted the priest.

"Undoubtedly, an enormous abuse; but do not think to escape me by confessing this. You must be able to prove to me that this abuse is displeasing to your Church—that she interdicts and struggles against it. Is this the case? Who encourages and directs all the homage which we see paid to the Virgin? Where does she reign so like a sovereign, a divinity, as in those countries where everything is done by and for the Church? Can you, do you not perceive that in these countries the people venerate, *adore* her alone? *Adore*, I say, for I imagine that you will not seriously attempt to make idle distinctions of words. What do you try to do against these errors? Who authorizes them if not your Church?"

"It is useless for you to speak in that manner," said the priest. "You cannot prove that all you have said is not for-

eign to the subject. Have you never seen anything abused, which seemed to you to be good and true?"

"Let us make a distinction, I beg, between casual abuses and those which are established. Error may creep into everything; but when a thing is of a nature to cause error, to encourage it, to render it inevitable, this of itself—whatever you may say to the contrary—is a grave argument against it. Now, among those who are sincerely devoted to the mother of our Saviour, tell me, do you know many in whose minds she occupies exactly the position assigned her by your theologians,—many who pray to her as if she herself must pray to God, and who, in the ardor of their belief, do not allow themselves to invoke her as they invoke God, to adore her as they adore God? All my life I have heard alms asked *in the name of the Holy Virgin;* and whenever I have given alms, the poor who did not know me to be a Protestant, have exclaimed, *The Holy Virgin reward you!* Everywhere, in the common way of speaking, it is she who blesses, protects, punishes, and saves; everywhere, as soon as she becomes anything in religion, she becomes more than you teach in your books that she ought to be. Once more; whether it be in itself good or bad, all that tends infallibly to cause error, and dangerous error, too,—is bad.

"One thing only could authorize or excuse the adoration of the Virgin; namely, that it is ordered or at least permitted by Scripture.

"Does Scripture order it? You cannot affirm it.

"Does Scripture permit it? You will say it does."

"And how can we help saying this?" replied the priest. "Mary herself said, 'All generations shall call me blessed!'"

"And do we refuse to call her blessed? But there is a long way between that and adoring her. You have, moreover, in

the gospel, a commentary upon this very word *blessed*, which is completely at variance with the sense which you wish to give it. A certain woman once cried, 'Blessed is the womb that bore thee!' and Christ replied, 'Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.' Another day he was told that his mother and brothers asked to speak with him. 'Who is my mother? Who are my brethren?' he asked; then, pointing to his disciples, he continued: 'Behold my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother.' In fact, if these words were not in the Scriptures, and we were permitted to arrange them as we liked, I do not think that I could imagine anything more favorable to our views.

"This was the station of Mary during the earthly life of her Son. Afterwards, she became still more subordinate. In the book of Acts, she appears but once; in the Epistles, she is not even mentioned. Yes! you cannot show us this name which you repeat unceasingly, which you engrave over the portals of your temples, which you wish to teach us to invoke, —you cannot show it to us even once in all the long exhortations of the apostles to the Christians of their time.

"And you, my children," he continued, addressing himself to his daughters, "you would speak where Saint Paul was silent! You would undertake to distribute places in heaven! Because your imaginations and hearts required one for the Virgin, she must have one! But reflect a little; it was just in this way that the Pagan divinities had their origin. They invoked all that they thought they needed, and everything that they invoked became a god."

"We have never invoked her," said one of the young girls.

"Were you very far from it? It is a very simple thing to

call her blessed. But as soon as you do not confine yourself strictly to that, what will be the consequence, if not an imitation of Rome? No, my children, no; do not deceive yourselves. Do not hope to be wiser and more steadfast than so many others have been. So soon as you have quitted Scripture ground, it is of little consequence whether you take one step or an hundred. It is the first which is the decisive one. Once upon the ground of human opinions, you must slip and roll on to the end. Honor the Virgin to-day, and you will invoke her to-morrow. Invoke her, and you will very soon adore her."

LXXIV.

NEW PLANS.

The young girls perceived their danger. It was, however, more difficult for them immediately to rid themselves of the impressions which their minds had received, and their father had too much sense to expect that this was to be the work of a day. But the priest was conscious that they were armed for the future with the best weapons for resisting his influence; distrust of him and of themselves, and a firm resolution to confine themselves on all points to the teachings of the Scripture. He saw plainly that he could do nothing more.

Accordingly, he resolved to summon an assistant, but not the same one whom he thought to employ for the minister and the three brothers. Charnay did not appear to him a person likely to win the confidence of a loving and unhappy family; and most unexpectedly the very man most fitted to do so presented himself. It was Father Bridaine.

He had just preached his Advent sermons in Toulouse. These sermons, although listened to with enthusiasm, had not

been able to divert the minds of the multitude from their gloomy preoccupations. The fanaticism of the citizens had moreover not received any nourishment from them, for although the preacher had avoided any allusion to the two great cases now being tried, it had been evident that he did not fall in with the blind hatred of the crowd. He was particularly interested for the family Calas, and inclined to believe them innocent. He was heartily desirous of convincing himself of this.

Accordingly, he had eagerly accepted the proposal that he should visit them. He was too much accustomed to study the human heart not to be certain beforehand that he would soon be certain what he was to think of them.

LXXV.

SUNSET.

Our prisoners had risen from table. The men were conversing apart, and the mother, with Rose and Anne, had approached the window. The last ray of sun, which we saw illumining the cell above them, had just disappeared.

"Gone already!" said one of the daughters.

"Already!" repeated the other.

"But no," resumed the first, "no regrets. Night is less melancholy than day in our prison. It seems to me in the day, that the sun is a captive like myself."

"Poor child," said the mother, "do you not rather consider the sun very happy, that he can go out from here when he pleases?"

"Perhaps so."

"And yet, he too is a captive."

"Oh! mother—"

"Is not his path marked out? Never, you know, never has he deviated from it, even a hair's breadth!"

"He is prisoner then, if you like. But what a prison? Infinite space—heaven—"

"*His* heaven! Have we not ours also?"

"We shall have it—"

"We have it now, my child, if we choose. Where God is present, there is heaven."

"And God is everywhere present, mother."

"Everywhere. And in the gloomiest prison, if we seek him there, still more than elsewhere. See, my child, a soul which has found God is freer than the sun."

"And more beautiful also, is it not?"

"Yes, more beautiful far. More precious in the sight of God than all the marvels with which he has adorned the universe. It will still be shining long after the sun is extinguished."

"Because it will be enlightened by another sun, which is to shine forever."

"The last glimmer of light has left us. Are you still sad, my daughter?"

"I am no longer sad, mother."

"And yet you are weeping—"

"You also, mother—"

"Hush! Some one is coming. Who can it be?"

"Good heavens! Another priest!"

LXXVI.

ANOTHER PRIEST.

"Yes, *another one*," said Bridaine, for it was he. "Yes, Mademoiselle, another one—"

But he drew near her at the same time, and his open and friendly countenance immediately destroyed the unpleasant impression made by his garb. Lavaysse, who had heard him preach, recognized him, and addressed him by name.

Then Calas approached him.

"Monsieur," he said, "you see that you are not unknown here. We know you to have been the friend and comforter of many sufferers. Will you be ours also?"

He extended his hand, but Bridaine looked at him fixedly.

"You are—Jean Calas?"

"Yes!"

Bridaine still looked at him.

"And you it is who speak in this manner?"

"Why not?"

"He is innocent!" exclaimed Bridaine, seizing his hand. "You are innocent. Yes, tell me that you are—you are innocent—yes, it must be so—"

"I have been asserting my innocence for nearly three months."

"And they cannot believe you?"

"Say rather, that they *will* not."

"And they are going—are going—"

"Finish. To condemn me, you would say. Is it not so?"

"Ah! Monsieur," cried the young girls, springing towards the missionary. "You see, plainly, that he is innocent. Save him! Save him!"

Bridaine took their hands in his.

"My poor children," he said, "do not deceive yourselves in regard to my power. Your father is innocent. Yes, I see it. I am certain of it, and I shall proclaim it loudly; but there are also many others who proclaim it, and no attention is paid to them. Resign yourselves. Pray, and God be with you!"

Before many moments he was one of the family. Seated beside the father, he inquired with tender interest what were their hopes and fears, and their employments during their captivity. They were themselves astonished at the confidence which they were inclined to place in him.

They had, in fact, nothing to conceal from any one. As prisoners, they but continued the quiet, humble course of life they had always led. What had they to dread from searching glances and close questionings? All that they could wish, on the contrary, was to be seen and known. Bridaine had seen them, and had immediately dismissed every doubt upon the subject of their innocence.

LXXVII.

STRUGGLE OF THE PRIEST AND CHRISTIAN.

But in spite of himself, he began to remember that he was not there only for the purpose of seeing them. The man was fully satisfied; the priest was not.

And yet, as he listened to the touching description of their feelings and their habits of life, he could not help asking himself what could be the benefit to them of the instructions with which they were constantly harassed—what these new doctrines could add to their resignation, piety and faith, in the highest sense of this latter word. Would religion occupy a larger space in their life? Would they pray to God more fervently? Would they love him more than now? Would they, in short, be more acceptable to God, if they embraced other doctrines than those which they now held? The priest endeavored to answer yes; the man and the Christian said no.

But the priest is so powerful! He is so accustomed to hold

command over the ideas, feelings, and even the strongest instincts of the man, in all those who wear the cassock. In this garb you no longer belong to yourself. Your intellect, your heart, your whole being, is at the service of a mysterious power, more feared than conscience, more imperative than God himself.

He considered, accordingly, how he should bring forward this other portion of his mission. He was occupying the place of Father Bourges, and felt that he had no right to neglect this.

"A great deal of piety, I see," he said, sighing.

"Ah! Monsieur," said Calas; "no praises among Christians. God alone can—"

"Alas! I did not wish to praise you. I could not."

Here was the priest. *I could not.* In truth the damned cannot deserve praise; and has a priest the right to think that Protestants are not damned? There is nothing which his Church has more frequently and clearly asserted than this.

"No," he said, "I cannot. The more I am touched by your piety, the more my heart murmurs to think that it is—useless,—that it is—lost."

This concern had been so long in making its appearance, that it was difficult to believe in it.

"Lost?" cried Calas. "Let us wait until God decide that. Lost! Yes, it may be so. 'Not every one who saith unto me, Lord! Lord! shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Christ himself says this."

"You acknowledge this?"

"Certainly; it is written. But it is not written anywhere that it is known in this world, who shall and who shall not enter. The gate is strait, it is true—"

"*The gate*, you say."

"Well?"

"Then there is but one—"

"I understand. And that is your Church, without doubt? If you are the gate, however, you certainly are not the strait gate, for one of the very reasons for our not joining you, is that we see you make the road to heaven so smooth and broad. With your absolutions for every comer, your indulgences at any price, your prayers and masses for all who want them, and even for those who do not want them,—since even those who have cared least for them during their lives, may still be profited by them after death.—with all these, I say, you have put heaven at such a low price, that we cannot help inquiring whether this is the same heaven of which Jesus Christ spoke."

"And yet," said Bridaine, "we are more accustomed to hear ourselves accused of too much severity, than of too much indulgence. Many of those who left us for you, two centuries ago, did not, you must confess, appear to be looking for a more severe religion."

"Many of those who joined us in the beginning of the Reformation, were still too much Catholics to comprehend what kind of liberty was spread abroad by it. They understood enough to throw off the yoke of the priests; but they had yet to learn to submit themselves to the authority of God. Besides, your objection is no reply to mine. You are severe, but where? In details. You have added to the laws of God a thousand tyrannical commandments, which you enforce at pleasure by the most terrible menaces. And what is the drift of all these threats, if not to make you multiply the means of heightening their effects? It is accordingly true in one sense, that you do not widen the gate, you straiten it on the contrary, beyond measure. But then at the side of it, you open hundreds, thousands of passages, among which a man may choose

the one most suited to his tastes, to his passions, even,—for there is scarcely one of the latter to which you do not offer heaven provided that it will submit to certain appearances and adopt a certain livery. I will not enter into details; but what have you not contrived in your public worship, for instance, to captivate sight, hearing, all the senses, to offer men the means of being pious, of serving God, of accomplishing their salvation in fact, by amusing themselves! And yet Jesus said: 'God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.' What have you done with this declaration?"

"We reserve it," said the missionary, "for those who are in a state to obey it. Unhappily there are very few."

"And whose fault is it? Your people are such as you make them. If they demand a great display, it is because they have always been accustomed to it. Do we need these things in our Church? I will even go farther. Do you in your churches, in the midst of this pompous ceremonial, do you perceive more devotion, more reverence, than the Protestants in theirs? This pomp becomes at length a necessity, but one the gratification of which no longer causes any pleasure; just as the man who gives himself up to a love for wine, requires more and more every day, although in reality he drinks it with less pleasure than he who drinks it rarely. Do you know who are the most impressed by your great ceremonies at Rome? The Protestants. One of our friends told me that one day at Saint-Peter's, he wept, and the Italians who perceived this, laughed to see his tears. All of them would not have laughed, I dare say; but this was certain,—at least to judge from the behavior of the crowd—that he alone was really and profoundly affected. Never, Monsieur, can you in your cathedrals have anything comparable to our assemblies in

the Desert. There are certain impressive moments in your worship, that for instance when the host is elevated,—although these many kneelings and bowings have too mechanical an appearance. But you can scarcely find, even in your convents, long hours of silence and motionless attention; yet we can offer you this sight in the open air, in assemblies of thousands of persons. Talk not of your magnificent singing and your skilful orchestras! We too, in some countries, know how to make use of all that is truly great and beautiful in music. But even in our humble psalms we can experience all the truly religious emotions which it can arouse. It never occurs to our people to expect, or to ask anything more. Even within these walls, when we wish at once to recall all the emotions and remembrances of the worship which is so dear to us—Listen."

And at this moment, by a happy accident, the prisoners in the cell above confirmed his words. They began their hymn of gratitude and love.

And whilst Bridaine, amazed, with his eyes fixed upon the vaulted ceiling, listened to these solemn sounds, the Calas, as we before related, replied to their invisible companions.

LXXVIII.

CHRISTIANS.

They had finished, yet Bridaine still seemed to listen.

"Well?" said Calas.

"Well?" said the missionary.

"Tears, I believe!"

"You confessed to me that one of your friends shed tears at Rome."

"And which are the most precious in the sight of God?"

"I know not."

"Oh! yes, you know. Those which flowed the most simply. Our friend was a little ashamed of having allowed himself to be impressed by the popish futilities. Are you ashamed of having been affected by our psalm?"

Bridaine smiled and bent his head.

"The circumstances touched me perhaps more than the singing," he remarked. "This prison,—the pious communion through this vaulted ceiling,—the peace—"

"Oh!" cried Calas, "I beg that you will not try to find an explanation. Let us believe that you understood and sympathized with us, that your heart sang with ours. And when you hear the coldness of our worship spoken of, say that—but it is not for me to dictate your reply. Reply, what your heart suggests,—for it is to your heart that we appeal. Say that you came hither to make us Catholics, and that we, the poor captives, have made you—"

Bridaine was about to protest.

"Do not be alarmed," resumed Calas; "did you think that I would say Protestant? No; we have not made you a Protestant any more than you have made us Catholics. We have forced you—that is all—to remain a Christian. Is it not so?"

"My duty—"

"As what? As a Christian or a priest? Your duty as a priest is to preach your doctrines to us, and to tell us that we are damned if we refuse to accept them; your duty as a Christian is to console us, to pray with us, to talk to us of God, to—But you know better than I can tell you. Choose between them!"

"Well! I have chosen!" cried Bridaine. "Yes,—I have chosen. I will pray with you. I wish you to look upon me

as a comforter, a brother. Nothing more, nothing less. Let us pray, my friends."

He kneeled; the rest followed his example.

"Oh God," he said, "this is one of your miracles. It is your will that the hearts of those who had not thought to pray together until death should have broken down the barriers which separate them, should unite here below in one impulse of worship towards you. Am I wrong, O God? Have I broken my vows? No! I never vowed to hate them. My vow obliged me to tell them that they deceive themselves, that they do not serve you as you would be served. But they love you, oh my God,—they love you,—as I would wish to love you! If not the same faith, at least the same love animates our hearts. I will pray for them. Lord, as they pray for me. Support them. Confound injustice. But let neither injustice, nor death, nor anything in the world, shake their confidence in your holy goodness. Let them live, and suffer, and die as your children, bought by the blood of Jesus Christ. Amen."*

Then there was a long silence. The prayer was silently continued by all these hearts, amazed to find themselves sympathizing so well with one another. They felt that they had never prayed to God more acceptably and fervently.

At length Bridaine rose. He repeated to them all that he had just said to God, in the simple yet elevated manner of which so few have the secret. And when the last song of the prisoners above resounded through the vaulted roof, he was still talking to them of the love of God and the joy of bearing the cross.

* This use of the plural pronouns in addressing the Creator, is peculiar to the Romanists, and sounds strangely offensive to those who take for their models the Scripture examples.—*Trans.*

LXXIX.

BEARING THE CROSS.

And that of our poor prisoners was to be a very heavy one.

It remains for us to follow them to the summit of their Calvary. Their blood must crimson our closing pages; may their spirit animate our closing words!

On the 19th of February, 1762, two hours after noon, a car surrounded by guards slowly traversed the streets, in the midst of a vast multitude of people, on its way to the church of Saint-Etienne. On this car, accompanied by four priests, were Rochette and the three brothers Grenier.

Their condemnation, pronounced the preceding evening, had been announced to them this same morning. They were condemned, the minister to be hung, the others, being noblemen, to be beheaded. The parliament, going beyond the laws which had been made concerning the ministers,—since they no longer died upon the wheel,—had ordered that Rochette, upon his knees before the door of the cathedral, "holding in his hands a torch of yellow wax weighing two pounds," should make an *amende honorable*, "asking pardon of God, the king, and justice, for his crimes and misdemeanors." The decree further ordained that he should be conducted to execution "bare headed, bare footed, and in his shirt, with the halter around his neck, and labels before and behind, with these words, *Minister of the religion claiming to be reformed.*"

Of all these grievances, that of being conducted to his execution thus accoutred, had appeared to him most cruel. He had almost wept with indignation. Let them hang him, if

they would, he said, but let them at least allow him, in the sight of the people, to retain his dignity as a man and a pastor.

And yet it only depended upon himself to escape from this opprobrium, and the gallows, and the *amende honorable*. Let him abjure, and all would be well! Let him abjure! No, that was not necessary. Let him but declare his intention of abjuring, let him even speak of it as a possible thing, and he should live.

Since his condemnation, he was persecuted more obstinately than ever with this offer, which had been repeatedly made him during the last four months. Once more, as they quitted the prison, the curé, charged with exhorting him, repeated it,—this time weeping and clasping his hands, Rochette thanked him for the interest which he appeared to take in his fate, but begged him to cease all endeavors to move him. His tone and air evinced that they did not succeed even in presenting him with a temptation to be overcome. The gaolers and guards wept. Perceiving one soldier more affected than the others, he said, "You are ready to die for the king; why then should you pity me because I am about to die for my God?" The priest was annihilated. He had scarcely seated himself upon the car before he was taken ill, and a vicar was obliged to supply his place.

This vicar was one of those priests, of whom many may be seen at the present day, who believe themselves to be zealous because they are unbending, pious because they are devoted to their Church, and holy because they consume their frames with tremendous struggles against the passions of youth. His pale, hollow cheeks and unnaturally sunken eyes, contrasted with the calm and noble countenance of him who was about to die. Rochette also was pale, but it was that serene pallor which in

dicates resignation, not strife, the dominion of the soul and not the control of the flesh.

And accordingly, he even dignified the infamous costume with which the executioner had covered his emaciated frame. No one thought of it. His face alone was gazed upon, and this was more and more illumined by the glory of martyrdom.

One thing alone disturbed its peace from time to time—the persecutions of the priest. Having no more arguments to use, he persisted in making Rochette kiss a crucifix. Unceasingly he placed it before his eyes or his lips, obliging him thus to turn away his face from it, and even to put it aside with his hand. "For God's sake," cried the prisoner, "leave me in peace! Christ is here—in my heart. You know it—you hear me call upon him. What need have I of this image?"

"I do not ask you to worship it," said the priest, "but press it to your lips." "No, that is what those do who worship it; the people will believe that I abjure." "And do you prefer to shock them by allowing them to believe that you reject Christ?" "It is you who force me to appear to reject him. It is because you wish to be able to say after my death, that I deny him—that all Protestants deny him." Then addressing himself to the crowd:—"My friends! my friends! you know, do you not? you know that I do not deny him! Christ! he is my master—my God—I have lived for him—I now die for him. It is not he whom I repulse—no, no, not he—" And the priest persisted, and the struggle must be recommenced.

The same persistence at first tormented the three brothers; but their guardians were older and calmer priests, exhausted, moreover, by several hours of struggling. They were able to talk with and encourage one another, and had even come to the aid of their friend, as well as they were able. The younger, in order to leave Rochette at liberty, had endeavored to draw the

vicar into conversation. What did he care if the bitter zeal of this man were directed against himself, provided that his pastor were enabled to appear calmly upon the scaffold, in order better to sustain to the end, the honor of their common faith? The vicar had not ceased his attempts, but Rochette perceived the generous intention of the young man. He acknowledged it by a smile and a glance towards heaven. This glance said: "Patience! yet a few moments, and we shall be beyond their reach."

LXXX.

THE AMENDE HONORABLE.

But these few moments were to be cruelly trying. They reached the cathedral, and the car stopped directly before the entrance, in an empty space encircled by a triple row of soldiers. The eye could scarcely penetrate the interior of the church, where it was dark as a tomb, and solitary as a desert. The door-way was hung with black drapery; far back in the building were visible a few tapers. Then a large white cross spotted with black, advanced slowly down the aisle, increasing gradually in size, although no bearer was visible.

Rochette thought that they wished him to enter, and declared that he would yield only to force. Then, as two soldiers approached to seize him, he left the car and advanced towards the door.

"To your knees, Monsieur," said the usher.

"To my knees, yes, before God. Not before this cross—not before the altar there in the distance—not before the host contained in it—"

And he kneeled upon the pavement.

The great white cross still came onwards, but more and more slowly. It seemed to fear the light.

As it advanced, a lugubrious chant was heard, a sort of long, hoarse groan. The death-knell tolled from the tower. The sombre silence from the interior of the building seemed spread around. The same terror seemed to seize men and animals, and to stiffen all who had power to move.

"What is required of me?" asked the minister, for he also felt this gloomy influence and wished to dispel it as soon as possible.

"Wait," replied the usher.

The great cross stopped at the door. The chant ceased.

"You will repeat—" resumed the usher.

"What?"

"What I am about to read."

"We shall see. Go on."

The usher read:

"I, François Rochette, here implore pardon of God, the king and the laws, for having knowingly and seditiously contravened the edicts and ordinances—"

"Monsieur!" interrupted the minister, "it is useless to go farther. Nothing shall make me repeat that!"

"Repeat it!" said the vicar, severely.

"Repeat it!" said another priest, more gently. "It is only a formality."

"I know nothing of formalities, when it is my conscience which is at stake—"

And he wished to rise, but they forced him to remain upon his knees. It was terrible to see this man, forced as it were, still to dispute his soul with those who were masters of his body.

The usher knew not what to do.

"Come, I will begin again," he said.

"I, François—"

"It is useless!"

"Repeat it!" cried the vicar.

He clasped his hands and bowed his head. They thought that he was about to obey.

But immediately, in a clear and steady voice, audible for some distance, he said—

"I implore pardon of God for my sins. From the king, I have no pardon to ask. I have always honored him as the anointed of God. I have preached submission and patience. I have said with the apostle: Fear God, honor the king. If I have disobeyed him concerning my ministry, it is because God himself and my conscience ordered me to disobey him. I have not transgressed against justice. I pardon my judges—may God also pardon them!"

"Yes, yes!" cried the three brothers. "All that he has said, we also say."

He had been allowed to finish; he rose.

"Stop him!" cried the usher.

But he had already mounted the car, and having passed the seat where he had submitted to the persecutions of the vicar, he sprang into the arms of his three friends. The priests, taken by surprise, made way for him. The vicar demanded that he should be made to return; but the commandant of the escort, whose heart was touched by these struggles, put an end to the scene by ordering the procession to move on. The cars rolled forwards; the church closed its doors. The condemned now belonged to the executioner.

LXXXI.

THE PRIEST AND THE HUGUENOT.

The parliament had thought proper to make a great parade of precautions. They pretended to apprehend plans of rescue. It was a good way, they doubtless thought, of giving some probability to the pretended crime of the three brothers, condemned, it will be remembered, as having wished to save their friend by a violent deliverance from the hands of justice.

Accordingly, instead of the place Saint-George, where the executions generally took place, the place of the Petit-Salin had been selected, as being smaller, less accessible, and more easily covered with soldiers. An entire regiment had been stationed there since the morning. The watch and horse-patrol which lined the neighboring streets could lend their assistance in case of need.

Two o'clock had struck. The crowd was more and more compact, and its impatience more and more feverish.

A priest advanced with great difficulty through the crowd and the soldiers who filled one of the streets leading to the place. The soldiers refused to make way; so did the people at first, but many of them appeared to recognize him, and hastened to open a passage for him.

"Father Bridaine, I believe!" said a woman. "What does he want here?"

"He wants to see."

"Fie! A priest?"

"Why not, since they are going to hang a minister?"

"He is looking for something. There, he is knocking at the door of that house. The Fortouls live there! Protestants! What is he going to do there? There, the door is opened."

It was really Bridaine. He had that same morning received the following note:

"A window is offered to Father Bridaine for to-day, in the house of Fortoul, on the Petit-Salin.

"Not a word of this, unless he wishes to be an informer."

He knew that Rabaut was in Toulouse, for he recognized him in this note.

Should he go or not? "Yes," he said to himself, "I will go." Since, as a priest, he was forced to accept the responsibility of the severities of his Church, he would at least condemn himself to admire those whom she put to death.

He entered the house, and was conducted to the second story. There, in the sombre light of the corridor, he felt some one take him by the hand. A door opened, and he could see who it was that held it. It was Rabaut.

"I was certain it was you," said the priest.

But Rabaut, without replying, and even without appearing to hear, led him towards a window shaded by a thin curtain. The murmurs of the crowd were still audible, but much fainter, and growing every moment more so. Silence was not yet established, but all noise was dying away.

The rolling of a car was heard.

"Come," said the minister; "come and see."

The car had stopped. A priest had alighted. Rochette was now alighting.

Then Rabaut kneeled. His clasped hands trembled, as they rested upon the window. Tears streamed down his cheeks. His gaze was fixed. His lips murmured incoherent words, last wishes for the friend, last prayers for the martyr.

LXXXII.

DEATH.

Freed from the persecutions of the vicar, Rochette had performed for his three companions the functions of that ministry which he was about to seal with his blood. From the cathedral to the foot of the gallows, he had not ceased exhorting and comforting his friends. If it had not been for his hideous costume, it might have been asked if it could possibly be *he* who was about to die, and even if he had only been there as companion and consoler of the others, his calmness and eloquence might have excited admiration. "We are near our goal," he said. "A few steps farther—a few moments longer—and all will be over. Your hearts will not fail you, I know,—but what is the source of your courage? Take care, you must die not merely as noblemen, but as Christians."

And as the procession arrived at the place, he resumed, "See! there is a great crowd! Friends! friends! think not of the crowd, of your own glory,—think of God alone—"

"Yes, of God alone!" they repeated.

"The car stops. No adieu, my friends,—no,—we shall meet again."

"We shall meet again!" cried the brothers.

"We shall soon meet again," he exclaimed once more, as he left the car; and this time, his voice was heard as far as the house from which Rabaut was about to witness his death.

And now Bridaine also kneeled. His head sank upon his hands. He wished to see nothing more, he hoped to hear nothing more.

But the minister now began his death-song, the one which

had resounded from so many scaffolds braved in the same cause:

"This is the glorious happy day
For which our longing hearts have prayed!"

And the three brothers joined him:

"Then praise the Lord who keeps our souls,
And will not let them be afraid."

And there were but three voices joining in these last words, for Rochette was no more!

"Dead!" exclaimed Rabaut.

"Dead!" murmured Bridaine, without raising his head. He was still upon his knees.

The heavy stroke of an axe was heard. One head had fallen.

"Dead!" repeated Rabaut.

It was the eldest brother.

Another stroke—

"Dead!" said Rabaut again.

It was the second brother.

There was a pause. There seemed to be a dissension between the condemned and the executioner.

"You have seen your brothers die," said the latter. "Do not be so obstinate as they. Change!"

"Never!"

"A word—a single word and you shall live."

"Never!"

"Change! change!" cried, with tears, priests, archers, commissaries of the parliament, officers and soldiers—all who surrounded the scaffold and covered the place. An unbounded pity at length burst forth. The younger of the three brothers

upon the scaffold, inherited all the tears and admiration which had been excited by the three preceding deaths.

But he had knelt down, and placing his head upon the block, thus waited.

The executioner bent towards him for the last time.

"In the name of God, change!"

"Do your duty," said the youth.

And the last stroke was heard.

"Dead!" exclaimed Rabaut.

"Dead!" repeated the missionary.

"Well," he continued, turning towards the minister, "are you satisfied? Have I suffered enough? Have you anything more for me to do?"

"Yes," replied Rabaut. "I still have something for you to do."

"What is it?"

"You have seen these executions. I wish you now to see what good they do."

"How?"

"Where shall you be on the twentieth of next month?"

"At Nîmes."

"At Nîmes; very well. *We shall meet again!*"

At these words, which reminded them of Rochette, they threw a last look at the body, still suspended, of him who had used them as his farewell to his companions in martyrdom.

LXXXIII.

FOLLY AND SOPHISTRY.

But the blood of the Huguenots was still to flow. Before the day of the rendezvous at Nîmes, Toulouse must witness another death upon which posterity has concentrated all its hor-

ror. The death of Calas was to obliterate all remembrance of that of Rochette.

"Think not of your own glory, think of God alone!" the latter had said to the three brothers; and in fact their names were soon to be forgotten by all save God. We have been rejoiced to recall them to the memories of men by means of this sketch. We know that we shall add nothing by it to their eternal glory. They have no need of our praises or remembrance, but we need to keep in our remembrance all those who have suffered for the sake of the gospel. If we are no longer threatened by the scaffold, still there are many other dangers which await those who dare to believe and to speak.

They were dead. What would be the effect, it was asked, upon the sentence of the Calas? Some said they would be acquitted; others said they would be condemned to die.

And the latter were right. The two cases were in reality one and the same. Things had reached a point where it was impossible to acquit the Calas without thereby appearing to confess the iniquity of the first sentence. And this first sentence condemned the judges to remain cruel and unjust to the end.

Some days afterwards, on the seventh of March the parliament gave one of those shows, more ridiculous than odious, of which we saw a specimen the preceding year, in the court of the Palais-de-Justice at Paris.

They were determined to burn Rabaut's last pamphlet with great pomp. His *Calumny Confounded* had deeply offended those whose plots it exposed, and whose sanguinary cruelty it condemned. "The title alone," said the attorney-general, "and the signature of Paul Rabaut, entitling himself *minister of the holy gospel*, should suffice to arm the laws with their utmost severity against those who dare to take upon themselves a title interdicted to ministers, even at the time when they

were tolerated in France." The title, in fact, could not be a very pleasing one, and we can imagine that they were indignant at it; but what is meant by saying that the "title alone" of the pamphlet "should suffice to arm the laws with their utmost severity!" Was it not a *calumny* to accuse the Protestants of authorizing murder, and was not this calumny *confounded* by all that the minister had said of it?* The whole accusation is in this tone. The smallest complaints in it are confounded with the most grievous; the same animosity joins and confuses all objects.

And nothing, moreover, could be more curious than the efforts of the attorney-general, to prove that in all this there was in fact no religious persecution. After having described the assemblies of the desert, according to his own ideas, he says: "You have just been witnesses and judges, Messieurs, of the spirit of pertinacious disobedience fostered by these. You have just punished a preacher, not for his errors of conscience, but for the temerity of his conduct. You condemned him, not as a bad reasoner, but as seditious and rebellious against the orders of the king." The king—they always brought forward the king. And who had been the king's counsellors? They must always use the sophisms of Charnay; the abominable subterfuge which Jean de Lourmade had so boldly exposed, on the day of the Jesuit's death.

* The pastors of Geneva had likewise given their testimony. They thought themselves obliged to witness, in a declaration dated January 30, and signed by the baron de Montpeyroux, that no synod had ever made decrees permitting parents to kill their children. What food for serious reflection in the very fact that such a declaration should have been deemed necessary! Beaumarchais was not so far wrong, after all, when he said that if he was accused of having stolen the towers of Notre-Dame, the first thing he would do would be to run off, if he could, not being certain that the first thing done to him would not be to hang him.

LXXXIV.

JUSTICE.

And accordingly, as a final and decisive reply to *Calumny Confounded*, they burned it.

Suddenly there was a great movement among the crowd in the place. They were conducting Calas to the Palace in order to undergo his final examination.

He was scarcely recognizable. For two months and more, he had struggled with energy against the fatigue of his imprisonment and the anxiety of the trial; but this had made their influence all the more rapid and profound towards the last. Every week had seemed to make him a year older. His furrows were deeply marked, and his locks had become white as snow.

With his head bowed down, he advanced slowly towards the grand staircase of the Palace, when happening accidentally to raise his eyes he stopped, grew pale, and seemed ready to fall. He was supported, but by the time he reached the staircase he could scarcely sustain himself, and they were obliged almost to carry him.

What had he seen? Nothing more than the innocent pyre upon which blazed Rabaut's pamphlet. But the whole scene, the noise, the bright daylight, the crowd, and the flames which suddenly rose before him, of whose object he was ignorant, all contributed to startle him. The executioner was for him, he fancied, these flames were to devour his body. The horrible thought only flashed across him, but it had its effect upon his weakened frame, and even upon his bewildered faculties.

And, accordingly, the judges were agreeably surprised no

longer to find in him the clearness of ideas and the imperturbable *sang froid* which had until now disconcerted the most decided among them. Being pressed by insidious questions, he hesitated, and two or three times appeared agitated. He was betrayed into inaccuracies which the judges hastened to exaggerate into contradictions. These were pointed out to him with an emphasis which increased his agitation, and he was hurried back to prison, as if it were feared that he would again find the thread of his ideas, and once more explain all that they had been at so much pains to render confused. He did not retract what he had said, but he felt that he had signed his own death warrant.

And yet the majority of the judges still hesitated to pronounce him guilty. Of the thirteen councillors comprising the criminal court, there had as yet been but four or five openly decided; but they formed one of those obstinate minorities, which always contrive to carry their point.

When they assembled, on the next day but one, to pronounce finally, seven were for condemning him to death. This was at length a numerical majority; but the legal majority was fixed at eight. New discussions ensued, the votes were taken once more, and one of the opposing judges was found to have passed over to the side of the seven.

Accordingly the sentence was pronounced by the decided majority fixed by the criminal law of that period. The judge who made the balance sink, was Monsieur de Bojal, one of those who at first appeared the most decided against pronouncing Calas guilty. Monsieur de Bojal was an old man, the senior councillor, a good-hearted but weak person. He was persuaded—or—who knows? Perhaps it was his dinner-hour and he was in haste to put an end to the discussion!

LXXXV.

SUSPENSE.

And in the meantime Calas was astonished still to be ignorant of his fate. He thought that the sentence had been pronounced two days before,—immediately after his last examination. Suspense and anguish completed the destruction of all his strength. What days and nights he passed! He weighed and weighed again each probability,—trembled at every sound,—wished to hasten or put off the moment which would end his uncertainty,—and felt himself hurried on with his hands tied, upon a torrent which might at any moment swallow him up, or cast him safe and free upon the shore; this was neither living nor dying; it was a terrible compound of all that is most cruel to bear in life and in death.

Thus the unhappy old man had consumed his strength for the last two days. With his courage and firmness he seemed even to lose his feelings as a husband and father, of which he had until now been a perfect example. He who had always been accustomed to think only of his family, now appeared to think of himself alone. He was absorbed by his fear, which had now become terror. Before killing the man, the judges had destroyed the husband and the father, and almost destroyed even the Christian.

But the Christian, husband, and father were to revive. Suspense had destroyed them; certainty was to restore them again to themselves and to those they loved.

It was evening. He had mechanically taken leave of his wife and his children. He scarcely remarked the sorrowful pity with which his state inspired them. He had been con-

ducted as usual to the apartment in which he was accustomed to be shut up during the night.

He seated himself, and from time to time a shudder convulsed his frame. Then he raised his head. His eyes appeared fixed upon some frightful object,—the scaffold, perhaps, or the wheel, and all its attendant horrors. Then falling again into a stupor, he sank back into his old arm-chair of black wood, which had been witness to so much of his agony. He seemed at those moments no longer to see or hear, and to enjoy, at least for a few moments, the melancholy repose of him who no longer feels or thinks.

But terror still waked in the midst of this seeming slumber. Like the sleeper, who still sleeping, hears the striking of the hour at which he must rise,—he, while dreaming, heard the slightest sound, the slightest footstep which resounded through his prison, or even without, in the street; and there was not one of these sounds or steps which might not be for him a messenger of death.

At length all was silent. He was somewhat calmer; he had several hours at least, he thought, before him. He would sleep then, for the last time, it might be, but still he would sleep.

He was accordingly about to retire to his couch. Kneeling at the foot of his cot, he endeavored to pray; and he did pray, more earnestly at least, than he had been able to do the evening before. He still saw the scaffold before him, but now he began again to perceive something else beyond it.

"O God," he murmured, "pardon me. Flesh has conquered the spirit. I have trembled as if thou wert not with me. I have trembled,—and I tremble still. They have worn me out with their delays! Support me, O God!"

But he suddenly stopped and arose, startled, and with his

hands tightly clenched. A key grated in the lock of his door; and it was the first time that the solitude of his night had ever been troubled at such an hour.

LXXXVI.

CERTAINTY.

Some one entered. It was Father Bridaine.

His countenance was not so gloomy that a sentence of death could be read upon it, nor was it unembarrassed enough for the prisoner to imagine that this was an ordinary visit, still less that the priest brought him good news.

Calas had just strength enough to offer him a seat, then he sank back upon his own.

"My brother," said the priest, "you appear to suffer."

"Yes,—I do suffer."

"Have you seen—your children?"

"I have."

"Are they—are they well?"

Calas looked at him fixedly.

"They are well," he replied, after a pause, and without removing his gaze from the countenance of the priest. Then, after another silence, "You have nothing else to—to *ask me?*"

To *tell me*, he meant to say; and his eye spoke this word, which his lips had been unable to pronounce.

"To ask you,—no," said Bridaine.

"To tell me, then?" cried Calas, rising.

But he was no longer the same man. He knew his fate, and as he felt what it was, he felt again the courage to meet it.

"There is a sentence—" said the priest, with an effort.

"I knew it."

"A terrible sentence—"

"I knew it."

"You knew it?—"

"From your agitation,—your eyes fixed upon the ground,—from the beating of your heart. I saw—I guessed—I knew."

But his soul was stronger than his weak body. He was forced to re-seat himself.

"And when?" he asked faintly.

"To-morrow—" murmered Bridaine, so low that it was scarcely heard above the throbbings of his heart.

Calas remained motionless.

"To-morrow," he repeated slowly, "to-morrow. Good God! To-morrow. And so it was for the last time that I saw them, that I—"

"No," said the priest, quickly, glad to be able to break the silence, "no,—you will see your wife, your children again. It is permitted."

"I shall not see them."

"You will refuse!"

"Yes. My resolution upon that subject has been firm for the last three months. I shall not see them again. Why should I do so? In order to die four times—five times, for Lavaysse also is one of my children;—to make them suffer anguish—from the terror of my death. No, no. Even if I did not fear such an interview for myself—it would be selfish—I should reproach myself for it upon the—"

The terrible word *wheel* was upon his lips. He stopped, as if it had called forth a fearful spectre. Then, with a violent effort, throwing off the terror which was again about to seize its prey, he resumed,

"To-morrow, then, to-morrow. And at—what hour?"

"At noon."

"At noon. Very well. Come, go on.—talk to me,—you see that I am calm."

"Noon is the time; but before that—"

"Well?"

"The torture—"

"The torture! administered to me! But is not the sentence a final one?"

"It is."

"Then why—"

"They wish to make you confess—your crime."

"What need of that now?"

"Law—custom—require it. Besides, many of the judges, it is said, only condemned you in the hope that you would confess."

"And as I shall not confess—"

"Unhappy man! Are you certain of that?"

"Certain of it? Because I am condemned, do *you* too believe me guilty?"

"I? Oh no,—no!"

"What do you mean, then?"

"Oh the torture! You know not what it is! The horrible, atrocious agony,—can you endure it?"

"Must I not endure those which come after it?"

"Must,—yes,—because you must. But that of the torture, you have but one word to say, and it is put an end to."

"But that one word would be a lie."

Bridaine tried in vain. He could not make the prisoner even imagine for an instant that pain could tear from him the confession of a crime which he had not committed.

LXXXVII.

THE TORTURE.

And, nevertheless, this immoral and impious weapon, of which the age strove in vain to deprive the law, had wrenched such confessions from many others.

And yet this was not one of those modern debates, into which reason only entered, accompanied by infidelity, civilization by relaxed morals, and new ideas by an avowed contempt for all that was old. Torture had, from the most remote periods, had eloquent antagonists. It had often been asked of what real use it was, and if, supposing it to be serviceable, its disadvantages did not far exceed its advantages.

Supposing it to be serviceable, we say; but was it really so?

It must be acknowledged that it was more frequently so than it would be at the present day. In many cases, it supplied the deficiencies of the police, and the negligence or incapacity of the magistrates.

But the employment of torture also contributed to the perpetuation of this negligence and incapacity of the judges, and this general deficiency of the police. They felt themselves to be the possessors of a means of discovering all that they wished to know, which was, to be sure, they conceded, not infallible, but which was prompt, easy and universal, and upon the whole very good. They rid themselves of the trouble of accurate trials, profound investigations, and all the care which justice is now forced to give to the trial of the lowest thief, by ordering the torture to be applied.

Were they at least certain of the information thus acquired? Common sense replies plainly in the negative, and experi-

case speaks quite as plainly as common sense. Every day some innocent person confessed, only to take back this confession when freed from the anguish which tore it from him; and every day some criminal persisted in denying his guilt, and shattered and expiring still denied it. These were no longer trials, but terrible duels between the judge and the accused, between conscience and anguish of body. "Torture," it was remarked by the jurist Ulpien,—who was very far indeed from being influenced by an excess of humanity,—"Torture is a fragile and uncertain weapon. The greater number of mankind despise it so much, that it contains no means at all for forcing them to confess the truth; while others, on the contrary, are so much terrified at it that they would confess any and everything suggested to them rather than endure it."

And accordingly the necessity of regulating its employment became very apparent. This was the state of things in France, in regard to this question, towards the middle of the eighteenth century.

In the first place, torture must no longer be employed save when the crime under consideration was one which required the punishment of death.

In the second place, there must be great "probability" of the guilt of the accused. The deposition of a single witness, the confession of another accused person, or the declaration of a condemned person, were not sufficient.

Whatever new proof might be presented, the accused must not be tortured twice in regard to the same point.*

If the accused were ill, or suffering, or too young or too old

* In Spain this regulation was admitted by the secular courts, but was evaded by the Inquisition. When the patient had suffered so far as he could without expiring, the torture was declared to be "*suspended*," and was renewed subsequently, as often as the judges saw fit.

to undergo the torture without danger of death, he was only to be "*brought into its presence.*" He was then reported as having undergone it, and even if terror had not forced him to speak, he could not be condemned to suffer it. This was what was called *comminatory* torture. Only the highest courts had the right to order its application.*

If the accused were put to the torture before the final sentence, he could not be condemned if he did not confess. The judge was supposed, by the fact of ordering it, to admit that all the proofs brought forward had been insufficient. Obtaining nothing farther, he could not logically condemn him.† This was the *preparatory* torture.

Last of all, came the *preliminary* torture, that administered subsequent to judgment, and previous to execution. In this case, on the contrary, as the judge was supposed to have good reasons for condemning the accused, his non-confession could not invalidate the sentence. The accused was informed that he could no longer have any motive for falsehood, and accordingly, if he persisted in denying the guilt of those accused with him, it was considered a presumption in their favor.

LXXXVIII.

THE LETTER.

Calas knew this, and it caused the torture to appear less terrible. He could not save himself, but he could at least contribute to the acquittal of his family.

* One of the reasons why the parliament of Toulouse had set aside the decree of the sheriffs, was that it ordered that Calas, with his wife and son, should be put to the torture, while it was only to be *presented* to Lavaysse

† He might refuse to pronounce him innocent, however, and keep him in prison. This medium is proscribed at the present day. Every crimi-

"To-morrow, then," he repeated; "to-morrow! And yet what a thought! To-morrow at this hour I shall be in the presence of God! To-morrow, I who am seated here,—I who speak—and hear,—I shall no longer speak, or hear, or see. I shall be lying cold,—I know not where. Where will they put my body? Do you know?"

"For God's sake, none of these questions!" said Bridaine. "What matters it where the clay tenement be placed?"

"Yes, what matter, indeed! Do I seem to care so much about it? But come, if you know, tell me. What will be done with my body?"

"It will be burned, and the ashes scattered to the winds."

"Ah! good God.

The unhappy man had been too certain of his indifference to these horrible details. He was filled with horror at the idea of this burning, this rapid and complete annihilation. He could think calmly of becoming a corpse,—but the thought of becoming ashes made him shudder.

"Yes," he resumed, with effort, "yes, you are right. Farewell to the body,—it is the soul alone,—the soul. But will they at least allow me to be master of my own soul? Shall I be permitted to expire in peace?"

"Father Bourges—has his duties to fulfil—"

"A priest is absolutely necessary, then?"

"Absolutely."

"Must it absolutely be Father Bourges? Another one—"

"Who?"

"Do you not understand?"

"I thank you, my poor brother," said Bridaine with emotion; "but it is impossible. I have spoken of it to Father

nal trial must result in *yes* or *no*, and if the crime is not sufficiently proved, an acquittal is a matter of course.

Bourges. He will—he persists in going. But I will tell him —yes,—I will tell him what I hope charity and humanity also will say to him. Yes,—he will let you die in peace. And then not far from you,—his eyes fixed upon you—praying for, and with you, will be—do you know who? Here—read."

He gave him a letter.

"To me!" exclaimed Calas. "This handwriting. Ah! good God!"

He read:

"Calas, you know your fate. All that it was possible to do, I have done. My efforts were not only useless, I was condemned to aid in your destruction. My pamphlet only irritated your judges; I am told that your examination of a few days since was influenced by the agitation into which you were thrown by the sight of the flames which consumed it. God has confounded my designs, as he has often done wiser than mine. Let us submit and adore.

"Calas, I can no longer offer you anything but my prayers. They shall accompany you until the moment when you no longer stand in need of them, when it will be your turn to pray for us, for the Church, for all those whom you have left behind under the oppression of the wicked. It is impossible for me to see and speak with you. God knows whether I would have hesitated to attempt it, if it had only been *dangerous* to do so! But it would be folly; it would be tempting God. I belong to our poor Churches—to my son, who is about to enter into the same career, and to whom Rochette has showed, as you are about to do, how a Christian can die.

"And yet, I cannot resolve to be with you *only* in spirit. Your friend will see you breathe your last sigh, Calas. If you can, look at a house well known to you, near to the scaffold.

There, concealed by a curtain, will be one who would willingly be on his knees at your side."

"Yes, I shall look," said Calas, "and God bless him. And you, too, who brought me this letter."

He read it again and kissed it.

"I shall keep it," he resumed. "It shall never leave me."

"You must not dream of such a thing. Suppose it should be found?"

"True. What shall I do with it, then?"

"Burn it!"

He read it a second and a third time. Then he held it to the flame of the lamp, but took it away immediately to read it again.

"Make haste," said the priest. "Some one might come."

The paper caught fire. A little ashes fell upon the table. That was all that was seen. This instantaneous destruction appeared to strike the prisoner.

"Nothing more?" he said. "Ah! this fire! these flames! And but an instant since, I held this letter in my hand—I saw it—I read it. Where is it now?"

"Here," replied Bridaine, placing his finger on the prisoner's heart.

"Yes, you are right. It is there, and no one can remove it."

"Well, courage, then. You, too, when your body is reduced to ashes in this world, will be in the bosom of your God, and no one can remove you from there."

LXXXIX.

THE SENTENCE.

The last day had come. Very early in the morning, Calas received official notice of his condemnation.

"The court has condemned and now condemns Jean Calas, accused and convicted of the crime of homicide, committed by him upon the person of Mark-Antony Calas, his eldest son, to be delivered into the hands of the executioner, and by him to be conducted, bare-headed and bare-footed, and in his shirt, upon the car destined for this purpose, to the principal door of the church of Saint-Etienne, where, upon his knees, holding in his hand a lighted torch of yellow wax, weighing two pounds, he shall make *amende honorable*, asking pardon of God, the king and the laws, for his crimes and misdemeanors; this being done, the executioner shall replace him upon the same car, and conduct him to the place Saint-George, where, upon a scaffold erected for this purpose, his arms, legs, thighs and back shall be broken; after which, he shall be exposed upon a wheel erected beside the scaffold, with his face upwards, in order to live there in pain and repentance of his said crimes and misdemeanors, serving as an example and a terror to the wicked, so long as it shall please God to give him life; then his dead body shall be cast upon a burning heap, prepared for this purpose, upon the same place, in order to be consumed by the flames, and the ashes scattered to the winds. Before the carrying out of this sentence, Calas is first to be put to the torture, in order to draw from him the confession of his crime, its accomplices and details. He is condemned, besides, to pay one hundred sous fine to the king."

The hire of the wheel, apparently!

The judges, however, in their mercy, had added, that instead of remaining upon the wheel "as long as it might please God to give him life," the condemned should be strangled at the end of two hours.

XC.

THE CHAMBER OF TORTURE.

Whilst the wheel and the funeral pyre were making ready in the place Saint-George, all was prepared in the chamber of torture.

There were displayed all the hideous instruments of torture, which had, one after another, been placed under ban by ages more and more humane; racks, pincers, pullies, the boot with its iron-bound wedges, chafing-dishes of all sizes, and chains of every size, without counting many articles which had no name save in the bloody jargon of the tormenters. All around the walls and pillars were rings and hooks. A low, vaulted roof, damp and blackened by the smoke of the brasiers, rendered this horrid arsenal still more gloomy.

In the middle of it stood a strong, high arm-chair, furnished with rings and pullies, and with its legs firmly fastened into the floor. The patient seated upon this, was only allowed to have his tongue free in order to confess.

Two men were just examining this horrid throne. One was the executioner, the other the sheriff David.

We have already seen what a hatred filled the mind of the latter towards the Protestants, particularly Calas. It was he who had ordered the arrest, he who had directed the first proceedings, and he who, after the annulling of the decree of the sheriffs, had moved heaven and earth to influence the parliament. As he was not able to be judge, he was determined to be executioner.

And yet, he began to feel, not without terror, what a responsibility he had taken upon himself. His hatred did not go

so far as to make him desirous of condemning an innocent man; he only desired, madly desired to be obliged in this case to punish a guilty one. What he desired so strongly, he had believed; and now he perceived that what he had believed was not entirely certain. Some, as Bridaine had said, condemned Calas, hoping that he would confess, but the fierce sheriff did not merely hope this. He was *determined* that the condemned should confess, and fell into an impotent fury whenever he thought of the possibility that he might not do so.

This caused him to take such a horrid interest in the preparations for the torture. He wished to see, touch, and try everything. He seated himself in the great arm-chair, and putting on the instrument, ordered the executioner to tighten it until he should cry out. The pain gave him a feeling of pleasure. It gave him, in its own energetic language, a promise that Calas should confess.

What instrument was this? One called *the wedge*, the only one, or almost the only one, then used in the kingdom.

Nothing could be more simple than it was. Four boards, a rope, a dozen wedges, and a hammer.

Each leg was placed between two boards, and the whole tightly tied with the rope. Then the wedges were inserted one by one, between the two middle boards.

The *ordinary* torture was six wedges; the torture extraordinary was six more.

When the first was inserted, the pain was considerable, but the second rendered it horrible. When the twelth was reached, the limbs were ground to pieces.

"Is everything ready?" said the sheriff.

"Everything, Monsieur," replied the executioner.

"What are you doing there? Greasing your wedges?"

"So that they will go in more easily."

"Bah! they will go in well enough. You have only to strike the harder. You are not greasing them all?"

"There are six. That is more than will be needed."

"Go on! go on!"

"It is useless; we shall not need even six."

"You think that he will confess?"

"Quite the contrary."

"Well? what then?"

"The commissioners will put a stop to the torture. He is sixty-three years old."

"No matter,—grease them all, I tell you!" cried the sheriff. "So you too fancy that justice is going to stop half way? I shall be there!"

He had no business to give orders, since the matter was in the hands of the parliament. His only right was his hatred.

So the executioner prepared the other six wedges.

XCI.

A HORRIBLE SCENE.

He had just finished, when steps were heard, at first confused, and then regular, like the tread of a procession.

This procession drew near. The steps sounded more and more slowly and solemnly in the echoing corridor.

At length two soldiers appeared, who stationed themselves one on each side of the door. Behind them came two ushers, then two commissioners of the parliament, in their robes, and then the condemned between two priests, Father Bourges and Father Caldagnès. A physician, a clerk, and two assistants of the executioner, followed by four soldiers, closed the procession.

The commissioners took their places upon a raised seat. The clerk seated himself at their feet. The executioner and his assistants stood motionless upon each side of the great arm-chair. Calas and the two priests stood before the tribunal.

"Clerk," said the first commissioner, "read that part of the sentence which relates to the present proceedings."

The clerk rose, and read:

"The condemned, Calas, is first to be put to the torture," etc.

"Calas," resumed the commissioner, "you know why you are here. It is enjoined upon us to draw from you the confession which you have, until now, refused to make. For the last time, I ask, do you acknowledge yourself guilty?"

"For the last time," replied Calas, "I reply that I am not guilty."

"Your accomplices?"

"There can be no accomplices where there has been no crime."

"Do your duty," said the judge.

The executioner drew near.

"My brother," said Father Bourges, "we now beg you, in the name of God, to do that which has just been demanded of you in the name of human law and justice. Confess."

"I should be lying if I did so."

"Glorify the truth."

"I do so by denying that I am guilty."

"Do your duty," repeated the judge.

He was led to the great arm-chair. A moment after, he was tightly fastened to it by all parts of his body, and the horrid instrument was tightened around his legs.

The executioner took a wedge, and inserted it, but only a

short distance, between the knees of the prisoner. Then, raising the hammer, he turned towards the commissioners, and waited. According to custom, there must be a third and last command.

The commissioner was evidently agitated. His eye was fixed upon Calas, and his almost supplicating glance seemed to implore as a favor that confession which he was reluctant to tear from him, and which, moreover, he was tolerably sure of not being able to gain by torture. At last, to the great surprise of those present, he left his seat and approached the prisoner.

"Calas," he said, "this is not my office. I ought to have given the signal. Spare me the pain of giving it. Confess."

"Monsieur, I thank you," replied Calas. "You pity me, and I did not expect pity here. But you would be the first to be surprised at the confession which you require."

"Surprised!"

"Yes. Your office is to believe me guilty, and to make me confess, if you can; but, aside from your office,—as you say you are at this moment,—I see plainly enough that you believe me innocent."

"Do your duty!" cried the judge, returning precipitately to his place. And he had not yet taken his seat, before the whole wedge was driven in between the prisoner's knees.

"First of the ordinary," said the clerk.

The executioner took another. Two blows of the hammer had been sufficient at first; this time it required four. Calas grew pale, and his features became slightly contracted.

"Second of the ordinary," said the clerk.

There was no more room at the upper end of the boards. They extended the prisoner's legs upon a sort of frame, in order to operate upon the whole length of them.

The third wedge required six or seven blows of the hammer The patient groaned, and a cold sweat broke out upon his brow.

"Third of the ordinary," said the clerk.

The executioner again turned to the commissioner. At every third wedge, the questions must be repeated.

"Calas," said the second commissioner, for the first no longer seemed to see or hear, "will you confess?"

The patient shook his head.

"Go on," said the judge.

The fourth wedge entered without much trouble, but it was near the ancle. Calas cried out.

"Fourth of the ordinary," said the clerk still registering.

The fifth and sixth wedges were inserted, each requiring eight or ten blows of the hammer. Calas neither groaned nor cried out. A convulsive tremor agitated his whole body.

Another pause; the question was repeated. Calas again shook his head and was silent.

"Go on," said the second commissioner.

The seventh wedge. The most terrible anguish now became visible upon the prisoner's countenance.

"First of the torture extraordinary," said the clerk.

The eighth wedge,—but as the executioner was about to insert it, the first commissioner cried,

"Stop!"

The sheriff had remained motionless, but was exceedingly agitated. Every time that Calas moved his lips, David seemed ready to spring forward and snatch from them the *yes* for which his conscience was thirsting. And this *yes* had not come forth! And he must give up hearing it! And yet they had only reached the eighth wedge!

"Stop!" he cried; "and why?"

"Stop," repeated the commissioner.

But as the executioner was about to untie the cord, the sheriff pushed him away.

"This man is in no danger of death," he said. "Surgeon, examine."

"Surgeon," said the commissioner, "you are to obey our orders,—not those of Monsieur." Then addressing himself to the executioner, he said: "untie him."

It was time, for Calas was fainting. The sheriff went away, infuriated.

Calas was carried to the couch of *resurrection*. It was there that the victims who had been by the torture deprived of their senses, were revived at the scaffold. It was a long time before he recovered his consciousness.

"Ah!" he cried, "I am still living! I hoped—I thought that all was over!"

But his head alone had returned to life. His body remained paralyzed: his limbs seemed dead. Yet no bones were broken. Great wounds alone showed the effect of the terrible pressure. In some place blood streamed from these wounds.

"My brother," said Father Bourges, "you have seen death staring you in the face. God has permitted you to return to life. It is a respite granted you. Profit by it—"

"If you wish me to profit by it, leave me in quietness, for God's sake!"

"Confess! confess!"

"Again?"

"Let him alone, gentlemen," said the commissioner. "Clerk, the protocol."

The clerk read:

"And the said Calas persists in denying his crimes and misdeeds. In testimony whereof, etc., etc."

He was asked if he had any observations to make. He replied in the negative.

If he would sign the paper.

"I will try," he said.

They handed him a pen. He laid his hand upon the paper, but suddenly, shaking the ink from the pen, he dipped it in the blood which was streaming from his limbs, and wrote:

"*I am innocent.*

"CALAS."

XCII.

REACTION.

At length many signs of that struggle between hatred and justice which was going on in the mind of the sheriff David, began to be perceptible among the fanatical population of which this same man had been at once the leader and the instrument.

The sentence of condemnation had not been received with half the enthusiasm which it would have excited at the close of October, in the midst of the lugubrious pomps with which the clergy had feasted the imaginations of the multitude. The memorials of the lawyers, the pamphlet of Rabaut, the firmness of the accused and the rage of their adversaries, all contributed to form a great majority in their favor in the minds of the intelligent public. This change had not had time to influence the less enlightened classes; they did not acquit, but they dared not condemn. The mob alone remained hostile; but a delay of five months had blunted their hatred, and they were upon the whole more disposed to pardon the judges in case they should not, than to rejoice in case they should condemn the Calas.

Accordingly, on the morning of this day, a feverish agitation was visible throughout the city. The partisans of the condemned, more numerous every hour, now dared to speak; few of his adversaries took the part of the judges openly and warmly. The greater part confessed that they would have preferred a little further delay. The result of the torture was awaited by all with the greatest impatience and anxiety.

Their emotion was accordingly great, when, a short time before the hour of execution, they learned that Calas had resisted the torture, and that his last assertion like his first, had been that he was innocent. Thousands of people had, like the sheriff, sighed for the day when their consciences would be freed from the responsibility which tormented them like him, and now they felt it become heavier and more terrifying than ever.

Thus it was not only the usual curiosity or horror which drew them irresistibly towards the place of execution. Calas, in dying, was to be the judge of his judges, and not only of his judges, but also of all those who had contributed in a greater or lesser degree towards his condemnation. If he confessed, his condemnation would become a grand act of popular justice; if he died refusing to confess, this same sentence would forever be the condemnation of those who had pronounced, or caused it to be pronounced. "Let his blood be upon us!" they had shouted in their first excitement: and now that this blood was really about to flow, they trembled lest they should see it fall in malediction upon their heads.

His demeanor and words deprived them of all hope. At noon he mounted the fatal car, saluting with head and hand the crowd which pressed around the prison. Two or three cries of "death" at some distance, found no echo. His appearance had been sufficient to change the remains of hatred in all hearts

into respect and pity. When the procession began to move, he threw a last look at the gloomy building where he left all that he had loved in the world. This look completed the subjugation of the crowd. "Courage!" cried a voice, "they shall live." "God grant it!" he said; "but they are not more innocent than I!"

On their way to the place of execution, both he and the priests were questioned every moment by the crowd.

"Did you confess?" they cried.

"No!"

"Are you going to confess?"

"What would you have me confess?"

And the questioner was silent, either cast down or relieved, according as he had hoped or feared to find him guilty.

Farther on, the same questions were put to the priests. They shook their heads.

"And do you think that he will confess?"

They raised their eyes to heaven. "His secret is between his God and himself," they seemed to say. But their thoughts went farther. They began to feel convinced that they were about to witness the execution of an innocent man.

And so they questioned him no more. They murmured with trembling voices, their prayers for the dying. They repeated to him, and repeated in French, moreover, passages from the Psalms. Calas listened and prayed; but while he bowed himself humbly before his God, he did not for a moment cease to show, in the eyes of the crowd, the assurance of a just man and the pride of the oppressed.

At the *amende honorable*, he refused, as Rochette had done, to repeat what was read to him. Like Rochette, he kneeled only to ask pardon of God, declaring that he had no forgiveness to ask from men.

XCIII.

THE WHITE CURTAIN.

The procession advanced. In every street the silence became more profound, and the crowd more gloomy and motionless.

When they reached the place, sobs were heard on every side.

When Calas appeared upon the scaffold, and cast around him, over the crowd, a glance still calmer than that with which he had left the prison, then if this immense assembly had been permitted to decide upon the fate of him whom they had come to see expire, there would have been but one voice, one cry, and he would have been carried back in triumph to his children, free.

But the executioners had already taken possession of him. They extended him upon the floor, which was formed of solid rafters, and tied him by his feet and hands to massive rings arranged in the form of a cross.

He had easily recognized the window with its white curtain, where Rabaut was to be. He could see it as he lay upon his horrid couch.

The priests kneeled at two corners of the scaffold and prayed. The executioner took his bar of iron. The crowd undulated. Some turned away their heads, others covered their faces. None wished to see the first blow.

But they heard it presently, followed by a cry of agony; then a second, then a third blow, but followed by no sound. The patient became accustomed to the iron bar—the spectators to see it rise and fall.

At the first blow, the first cry, the curtain was half opened.

Calas perceived his friend, and beside him an open Bible. Rabaut pointed with one hand to the book, with the other to heaven. At the last blow, the white curtain was again closed.

And now came a moment more agonizing than the blows with the iron bar; it was when the executioner came to move and gather up these shattered limbs, to carry them, mangled, to their last couch of anguish.

But the executioner, more humane than the judges, had thought of a method of easing this terrible operation. A sheet which rested beneath the body of Calas, permitted him to be carried, extended as he was, to the wheel. An expression of the acutest agony was upon his countenance, but this sign of compassion had not escaped him. He acknowledged it by a movement of his head, and forgetting his crushed and broken bones, he seemed to strive to extend his hand to his executioner.

One thought had not left his mind. Should he still be able to see the window with the white curtain? Should he be permitted to expire gazing upon it? He looked. It was at his right hand, and still nearer than before.

XCIV.

TWO HOURS OF AGONY.

It struck one. He must exist, then, for two hours longer.

The two priests drew near; Father Bourges wept. He felt all the doubts which remained in his mind, disappear before the firmness of the martyr. He gazed at him in silence. What should he say to him? what consolations, what exhortations offer? He would reject Catholic exhortations; those purely Christian he would undoubtedly receive with joy, but

would not this be an admission on the part of the priest, that he gave up all idea of offering him any others, and that a dying man could after all, do without them? Father Bourges had not, like Bridaine, a mind elevated enough to enable him to put aside this inevitable struggle between the Christian and the priest. He was alarmed to feel himself so near believing in the salvation of an obstinate heretic, and feared to confirm him in these holy expectations of which it was his strict duty to deprive him. And yet, convinced of his innocence, a witness of his resignation, what could he do, if he spoke to him, but point him to the heaven awaiting him? Accordingly, he was silent and wept.

Calas, thanks to the perfect immobility of his position, suffered less than at first. He could not see the window constantly, for fatigue forced him to let his head fall back, "his face upward," as the sentence directed; but his features were again calm; he prayed.

Twice had Father Caldaguès again addressed him, and twice had Father Bourges been obliged to moderate the importunate zeal of his colleague. Caldaguès was one of those priests who believe in the Church more than in God, in the pardons of the Church more than those of God. He asked Calas neither to abjure nor to repent; if he confessed,—no matter what,—that was all that was necessary. But Calas made no reply; he continued to pray. He confessed to Him who is so great that he knows all; and so mighty that he can pardon all.

But from time to time the most agonizing pain interrupted his prayer. His features became contracted, and his eyes wild. The body exercised its last rights over the soul, and the soul murmured that it could not yet be free.

Once he cried, consumed by a burning fever, his eyes glazed and staring:

"What time is it?"

"My brother," said Father Bourges, "you have begun so well, do not give way now. Yes, it is long,—terribly long,—but eternity is far longer,—and eternity draws near,—it will soon be opened to you. In a few hours, shall you remember a little more or a little less suffering? No. Do not ask what time it is. It is the time to pray,—the time to offer to God,—if you are innocent—"

"Still *if?*" said Calas, with a reproachful look.

"No, not *if*," resumed the priest. "It is the time to offer to God, *since* you are innocent, your sufferings,—to cast yourself into his arms—"

He stopped, as if alarmed at what he had just said. A heretic received into the arms of God! Was not the very thought itself a heresy?

"Go on," said Calas, "your words do me good."

But he cast down his eyes and was silent. He was again the priest.

"Yes," resumed Calas, "they do me good. I asked what time it was, did I not? I scarcely recollect—I suffered so much. But I was wrong,—I was wrong,—it was a murmur. God will forgive me. O God, thy Son prayed that the bitter cup might pass from him. But I did not pray—I murmured. Ah! I am punished. I asked the hour. I hear it now."

Two o'clock struck from the tower of a neighboring church.

"I hear it now," he continued. "I thought I had but a little while yet to suffer. An hour yet,—a whole hour! But is it in reality but an hour since I was placed here?"

"Scarcely an hour," said the priest.

And as he spoke, two o'clock sounded from another church.

"Again!" exclaimed Calas. "Well, I thank thee, O God! There are many now in their graves, who would have been

glad to be warned hour by hour of the approach of their death. I thank thee, O God! But enable me at least to consecrate entirely to thee that hour which thou dost still grant me on earth. Let not pain take entire possession of it, and bewilder me, and I shall feel that this time, which my fellow-men give me from cruelty, thou givest me from mercy."

Thus spoke and prayed Calas; and from that moment, whether his sufferings were really less acute, or whether he had no more strength with which to struggle against them, his repose was not again disturbed. Sometimes he was silent, and his gaze was fixed upon the heavens; sometimes, with his eyes closed, he murmured long and fervent prayers, and then, turning his head towards the window, he united his thoughts and petitions with those whose eyes he knew to be fixed upon him.

"Well, my brother," said the priest, at length, "is your sacrifice now complete? Is your resignation entire and absolute?"

"I hope it is," was the reply; "I would willingly be assured of it."

"You may be."

"How?"

"Suppose you were suddenly told that you must remain here two hours longer, what would you do?"

Calas reflected a moment.

"I would submit," he replied.

"Entirely?"

"Yes,—entirely."

"It is well, my brother. Thus God would have you feel. The trial has brought forth its fruits. It is now about to end."

It was near its close, in fact. The fire was lighted, and Calas felt the cord move, which was around his neck.

Then he turned towards the window. The curtain moved. A hand, of which the fingers alone were visible, prepared to draw it aside.

But suddenly the ladder leading to the scaffold creaked, a hasty step was heard. Calas half turned. It was the sheriff, pale, beside himself, absolutely terrifying. He sprang towards the wheel, thrust aside the priests, and, with a voice of thunder, cried—

"Unhappy wretch! the fire is prepared,—a few moments more, and your body will be reduced to ashes! In the name of God, who is to judge thee, confess, confess!"

The eyes of the dying man sought the spot where his heart was.

At the same moment, the cord was tightened about his neck. A few seconds, and he was no more.

But the curtain had been half opened, and he had again seen his pastor, with one hand on the Bible, and the other pointing to heaven.

XCV.

TWO OLD FRIENDS.—HOPES.

Ten days afterwards, on the 20th of March, 1762, a man was seen very early in the morning ascending the stony pathway which had been near witnessing the capture of Rabaut by the marquis de Narniers.

This man, though still young in years, bore on his brow marks of the triple old age of passion, grief, and hardship; but an energetic soul and even a sort of gladness were perceptible through the furrows of his countenance.

He appeared agitated. From time to time, he paused, either to take breath, or to look around him. And yet he did

not appear to be seeking his way. These scenes were evidently familiar to him.

When he had nearly reached the cave, his emotions increased. He could scarcely support himself; he appeared even to hesitate whether he should go on. At last, as if he had suddenly made a great effort over himself, he quickened his steps, and went and threw himself on his knees upon the spot where the aged Fabre seated himself on the fatal day of treason, to weep the fate of his son.

And now he also wept; he seemed to implore the pardon of God for some great fault. His head was bowed down upon the rock moistened with dew. His whole frame was agitated, and the trembling of his clasped hands was accompanied by the murmur of his lips. His eyes, at first raised to heaven, were now bent to the earth.

A man, unperceived by him, had just come out of the cave. After having examined the suppliant a moment from the entrance, he approached him, but slowly and noiselessly. He bent down towards him as if to hear the words of his prayer.

At length, putting his hand upon his shoulder, he said:

"Bruyn!"

Bruyn, for it was he, rose quickly.

"Fabre!" he cried.

He drew back at the same moment, but Fabre extended his arms, and he threw himself into them.

"And you too forgive me!" he said; "you of whom I was just thinking at that moment. But—how is it? You here? Are you free? Did you escape?"

"I was pardoned," said Fabre.

"By whom?"

"Influential persons interested themselves for me. It seems that they made use of—of—"

"Yes, of your devotion to your father."

"At all events, I am free."

"How long since you were set at liberty?"

"It was on the tenth of this month."

"Ah! the very day—"

"Yes—Calas—I know. But his blood will not have been poured out in vain. He would have given it willingly, and of his own accord, if he could have foreseen what his death would be worth to us."

"So you hope—"

"I do. There was a general indignation aroused. At Toulon, at Marseilles, in all the cities through which I passed, there was but one voice against the parliament of Toulouse. But this was not all. The laws for our government were examined, and much astonishment and indignation was aroused to find them still valid. At Montpellier, the Prince de Beauvau requested to see me. He praised me—far too highly—but all his praises were promises of tolerance and peace. Everywhere I was assured that the end of our sufferings was near."

"But they were not priests, my poor Fabre, who told you this. And the priests are far more powerful than the Prince de Beauvau—"

"And therefore I only said that I hoped—not that I was certain. There is no longer any doubt that we are moving on towards an era of toleration; but we may still be a great distance from it. The Jesuits are to be expelled; but not the spirit of persecution, which is, in fact, no more their's than that of the rest of the ecclesiastics.* In the meantime, let us be grateful to God, and profit by the interval of peace which he grants us. Does he not hold all hearts in his hand? You see

* We have seen elsewhere how the clergy struggled against the tolerant views of Louis XVI., until the revolution.

that this same marquis de Narniers, who has done us so much harm, has now become one of our warmest protectors."

"I know it," said Bruyn.

"But what you perhaps do not know, is that the assembly of to-day is to take place under his protection. It is said that he has an understanding with all the military chiefs of the province. For the first time in nearly eighty years, we are secure against interruption. A glorious day, Bruyn, for our churches!"

"For you, Fabre!"

"And for you, also, Bruyn. The church is like heaven. She feels more joy on witnessing the return of one repentant sinner, than—but we cannot speak of the righteous—than for ninety and nine of her children who have remained faithful to her. You have not been in the province for a long time, Bruyn?"

"No! and I at last made a vow never to return."

"Who released you from this vow?"

"*He* did. I was at Paris. He wrote me. See—read."

"'The twentieth of March, my dear Bruyn, is to be an important day for me. We are to dedicate to the holy ministry the eldest of my sons, the companion of your youth. I wish, also, that this should be the day of your public and solemn reconciliation with the church, which has mourned you as lost. I request this as a friend, and if needs be, I exact it in virtue of the authority which you have given me over your conscience. Come—and it may be that God has more blessings in reserve for you than you dare to hope.'"

"What does he mean?" asked Fabre. "Is the last sentence a wish, or is it a promise?"

"I do not know. The only blessing for which I hope, is the reconciliation which he promises me. What more have I to expect? Since the death of Madeleine—"

"What! Madeleine is dead?"

"Did you not know it?"

"Where? In a convent?"

"In the house of an abbé, who wished her to become his mistress."

"Infamous? And you knew it?"

"Only when too late. She being dead, you can see that my hopes in this world do not go beyond my restoration to the regards of my former brethren. Be that as it may, I wished to pass again over this ground. I wished to see once more in detail all these spots—"

"And I too," interrupted Fabre, in order to prevent him from recurring to his melancholy history. "I arrived at Nimes only yesterday evening. I just had time to embrace my father—"

"And my father, Fabre, how is it with him? How did you leave him? I heard that you were a son to him—"

"My departure was very painful to him."

"Did you know that I had petitioned to be put in his place?"

"Yes, and that it had been refused you."

"It was but just. I did not deserve to be allowed to perform a good action."

XCVI.

THE ASSEMBLY.

They at length reached the *Temple*. This, it may be remembered, was the name of one of the places where the largest assemblies were held. Ten thousand persons could be seated in it. The numerous pathways leading from it, and the well-placed eminences from whence danger could be perceived at a

great distance, had rendered this place famous in the history of the desert.

Some of the worshippers, who had come in other directions, were already assembled there. The pulpit was arranged, and behind it a tent for the pastors.

New arrivals followed, at first few in number, and then in a great and steady stream. Very soon the whole place was full, although there was still more than an hour to wait.

The greater number, however, were still ignorant of the fact that the assembly of to-day was held under the protection of the marquis de Narniers. They came as usual, prepared to submit to the consequences of their *crime*. They had left their dwellings, as they always did, with the feeling that perhaps they should never enter them again.

The death of Rochette and the three brothers, and that of Calas, the details of which had been known only for a few days, naturally formed the chief subject of conversation. They felt that they were more than ever under the rod, and yet never had a more numerous and eager assembly been seen at the *Temple*. To their usual ardor was added the attraction of the expected ceremony; and to this attraction that of the very danger itself, and the bloody remembrances which presented themselves. They gloried in erecting once more the pulpit which parliaments and kings had for a hundred years past done their utmost to overthrow,—and in erecting it, moreover, in sight, as it were, of the gibbet of one of those accustomed to ascend it. Upon hearing a description of these glorious deaths, all asked themselves if they should die with the same courage, and all felt impelled once more to assure themselves of their courage by braving the laws which Rochette had perished in braving.

There was a crowd around Fabre, and another, even larger,

around Bruyn. The prediction of his friend was verified; his poor brethren were more delighted and more affected at the sight of his sincere repentance, than at the sight of faultless virtue, even surrounded by all the splendor which the world can bestow.

XCVII.

THE RECONCILIATION.

Seven pastors, according to the ancient custom, were to unite in dedicating their new companion to his work. The pastors Vincent, Guizot, Encontre, Gibert, Bastide, and Pradel, had already arrived, accompanied by the elders of their respective churches. Our two friends, who stood near the tent, had seen them enter it.

"*He* is not yet here," said Bruyn.

"Yes, you know that he is stopped every moment. All are so anxious to speak to him! But what is the matter?"

"Ah!" cried Bruyn, with a groan, "he arrived late on that day also, when—ah! good God!"

And he covered his face with his hands.

"No," he resumed, "I cannot help it,—in spite of my struggles, I feel anew all the tortures of that day. Do not try to prevent it; it is useless."

"Well, here is some one who will relieve you."

It was Rabaut, preceded by his four guides, and followed by a numerous group. His son was beside him, and was to-day the centre of all eyes.

When he had nearly reached the middle of the assembly, Rabaut asked if Bruyn had been seen. He was told that he would find him farther on. But his question had already

flown from one to the other, so Bruyn advanced, led by Fabre, and they both presented themselves before the pastor.

He looked at them a moment, and then, without a word, signed to them to follow him.

A raised platform, prepared for the six assistant pastors, was seen in front of the pulpit. He led the two young men upon it, and then standing between them, in the midst of the most profound silence, he said:

"Brethren, behold the prodigal son, and also the son who remained pure. To-day you represent the father. Bruyn has sinned; but he has also said, 'I will arise, and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned—'"

"Yes!" cried Bruyn, throwing himself upon his knees.

"My brethren," continued the pastor, "do you pardon him?"

"Yes! oh yes!" was the cry.

"Do you declare him reestablished in his privileges as a member of the Church?"

"Yes!"

"Raise him, Fabre. You have by your long slavery acquired the right to represent our oppressed Church. It is the only distinction she can offer you. Come, my children, come—"

They threw themselves into his arms, and again and again, in the sight of the deeply-moved assembly, he gave to them his benediction.

XCVIII.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

At length, as they left the platform with him, he said:

"Do not go far," and went to join the other pastors, who assembled before the tent, had been present at this scene.

But while their friends crowded from all directions to press their hands once more, Bruyn said in a low voice to Fabre:

"Did you see, Fabre?"

"What?"

"There behind the pastors."

"Well, who?"

"A man wrapped in a large cloak. Another younger man was beside him."

"No, I did not see them."

"The younger man was the marquis de Narniers."

"He was desirous of seeing our assembly, I suppose. We have frequently had Catholic visitors."

"Yes, yes,—but the other. He tried not to be seen,—but still,—I am nearly certain—that it was Father Bridaine."

Bruyn was told that the pastors were asking for him. As he approached the tent, the marquis, for it was indeed he, came out of it.

"Bruyn," he said, extending his hand, "your brethren have pardoned you,—will you also pardon me? I have been very wrong in my conduct towards you."

"We will not speak of it," said the Cevenol.

"No,—we must speak of it. I feel that I must acknowledge it openly. I do it sincerely, I assure you."

"I believe you do; but still, do not let us speak of it; if not for your sake, at least for mine. The past is too terrible."

"The future will make amends for it."

"Impossible."

"How do you know?"

"How I—know? But you look at me—in such a manner. Good heavens! what is it?"

"Let us go in."

They advanced. But how should we be able to depict the scene which took place?

At the entrance of the tent, motionless and breathless, stood Bruyn; a few steps from him, pale, half insensible, his Madeleine!

Monsieur de Narniers, the bishop, was dead. His nephew, now become bishop, had spread abroad the report of Madeleine's death; then he judged it most prudent to rid himself entirely of a mistress, who was so but in name. He submitted to the loss of his wager. He confessed that Madeleine was living, and that he, the invincible abbé, had found her invincible. The colonel had written to Rabaut of this, and they had made arrangements to restore her to him to whom she had remained faithful.

The marquis took her by the hand, and said,

"Bruyn, she is pure as when she was torn from you."

And whilst the Cevenol, who had evidently awaited this assurance in order to believe in the reality of his happiness, at length clasped his beloved in his arms, the marquis continued:

"Your sufferings meet with no theatrical termination, my poor friend, where everything goes smoothly and successfully at the last. Your father is at Toulon, your mother at Aigues-Mortes. Madeleine's grandfather and brothers are likewise at Toulon. I dare not promise you that all these relatives, whose presence is wanting to complete your happiness, shall be restored to you; but we will hope for it. The number of your enemies diminishes from day to day; but there are some who are implacable, and it is they who rule the consciences of your oppressors. And unless they deny their own doctrines, they cannot even now consent to leave you in peace. But still, I repeat, we will hope."

"Yes," said Rabaut, "in spite of persecutors, God will make time powerful. My children," he continued, "let me bless you now, while you are awaiting a more solemn benediction. Misfortune estranged you from God; misfortune has again brought you to him. From this moment, be his forever. Belong more to him than to one another."

"Amen!" murmured a voice which made the Cevenol start.

He turned quickly. It was Bridaine.

XCIX.

THE PRIEST AND THE HUGUENOT.

The hour drew near. The murmuring of the vast crowd was succeeded by a profound silence. The reader was in his place; the precious verses penetrated solemnly and distinctly to the remotest corners of the *Temple*, and ten thousand hearts joyfully and gratefully gathered this ancient manna of their desert.

Suddenly, ten thousand voices broke forth in that triumphal hymn, which had been sung three months before by lips now closed in death.

The procession had just quitted the tent. An humble procession truly; but how many earnest petitions and touching recollections accompanied it on its way through the crowd!

At first came several elders; then Rabaut, then his son, between two of the pastors, and then the four others, all in their robes. Several elders followed; that was the whole. Still here was all the pomp of Protestantism; and such as Bridaine now beheld it beneath the vault of heaven, he would have seen it in the cathedral at Geneva.

He had remained in the tent. Without being seen, he was

able to hear everything, and could even perceive the pulpit, and those of the crowd who sat near it.

At the foot of the pulpit, upon the platform, were seated the pastors; in front of them stood the youthful candidate Saint-Etienne.* In the pulpit was Rabaut.

Then—

But why should we attempt, step by step, to follow this ceremony, of which we are incompetent to give more than a feeble and insignificant sketch? As for those who are unable to feel what it must have been, in this spot, beneath the open vault of heaven, ten days after the death of Calas, and scarcely a month after the death of Rochette, no description could aid them in forming an idea of it.

But of all this agitated crowd, perhaps the most agitated and affected, was he whom no one perceived,—Bridaine.

At the sight of this young man, upon whom his own father was conferring the right to mount the scaffold for his faith, Bridaine again felt all the emotions which had agitated him a month before, upon witnessing the execution of Rochette.

The pulpit seemed to him to be erected in the midst of an ocean of blood, and a voice within him cried, "And thou too hast shed this blood!"

And then he shuddered at the thought of hearing the text which he himself had given to Rabaut, nearly two years before; he hoped that Rabaut would have forgotten it. But no; "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves," he read, and the agitated movement of the crowd, the sobs which burst forth, and the emotion of the preacher himself, made the text alone almost as impressive as the most eloquent of sermons.

* This is the Rabaut de St.-Etienne, who was a member of the National Assembly in the early times of the Revolution, and who lost his life by the guillotine in the Reign of Terror.—Tr.

An hour afterwards, they re-entered the tent, and the new minister threw himself into the arms of his father.

And Rabaut, exhausted in body and soul, could only murmur, "My son—my son—God be with thee!"

And another voice repeated, "Amen—amen."

This time it was his farewell. Bridaine was overwhelmed by his emotions; he had no courage to bear anything more. He disappeared among the crowd. The Christian had suffered too much; he accordingly went away. The priest had struggled to resist,—but in vain.

THE END.

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